$1.50

CHRONICLES OF CULTURE

LETTERS & ARTS MORALS & MANNERS

Fred Chappell
James Hitchcock
Paul Hollander
George Marsden
Brian Murray

Church ± State

VOLUME 9 • NUMBER 3 • MARCH 1985

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CHRONICLES OF
CULTURE

Vol. 9, No. 3 March 1985
Church ± State

CHRONICLES OF CULTURE (ISSN 0163-1187) is published monthly for $18 per year by The Rockford Institute, 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103-7061. Application to mail at second-class postage rates is pending at Rockford, IL and additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *CHRONICLES OF CULTURE*, P.O. Box 800, Rockford, IL 61105.

Editorial and Advertising Offices: 934 North Main Street, Rockford, IL 61103. Editorial phone: (815) 964-5054. Advertising phone: (815) 964-5811.

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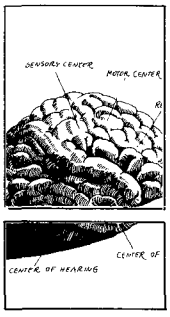

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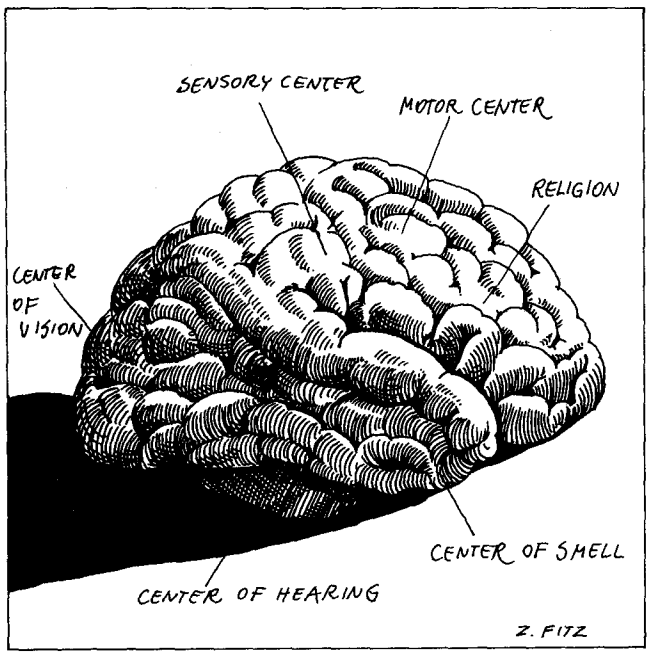
PRIVATE FAITH & PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Martian attending Inauguration Day ceremonies might be curious about the book upon which the President lays his hand as he takes the oath of office. "That," we would tell him, "is the Bible, a book of Scripture sacred to most American citizens." "I see," our alien friend responds, "and therefore your President is obligated to govern the nation in harmony with its principles." "Not exactly," we answer. "We believe in the separation of Church and State. The use of the Bible is just a nice tradition. If the President actually tried to implement many biblical teachings, he would run into serious legal and judicial difficulties. Indeed, if a teacher in a state-sponsored school were to teach out of the Bible regularly, he would be disciplined, dismissed, or perhaps even jailed." Even with the usual Martian advantage of two heads, our visitor would probably be so confused at this point that he would start looking for a saner planet. Since this is the only country—and world—we have, we would do well to consider the paradox.

America, G. K. Chesterton believed, has "the soul of a church." Actually it would be more accurate to say that America has the soul of a Bible. Decidedly Protestant, America's attitudes toward ecclesiastical institutions have been problematic from the beginning. As late as 1800, only 7 percent of all Americans held formal membership in some church, though many more attended services and yet more read and believed in the Bible. Many of those who did hold membership in a church in 18th-century America belonged to what in England had been called a "dissenting" denomination, often one that allowed virtual autonomy to individual congregations. Writing in England in 1682, John Dryden complained that "the private spirit" of Protestantism was creating "a thousand daily sects" in England. The endless fissioning, sparked by disparate readings of the Bible, provided many of America's independent-minded immigrants, who continued to multiply denominations in their new home.



Given the American suspicion of church discipline, it is not surprising that the framers of the Constitution and Bill of Rights—most of whom were Christians of one sort or another—wrote into the First Amendment a clause prohibiting the establishment of a national church. (This antiestablishment clause, of course, applied only to Congress. Individual states were free to establish an official state church if they wished: Massachusetts and Connecticut in fact did so, and no one at the time viewed this as unconstitutional.) Certainly the antiestablishment clause was never intended to restrain the public or private practice of religion. Rather, the intent was to insure everyone's free exercise of faith against the kind of religious persecution that many of the original colonists had fled.

The Founders also assumed that despite doctrinal differences, the free exercise of conviction would everywhere reinforce the ethical norms of the Ten Commandments and the Golden Rule. Most political leaders realized that a shared moral consensus was the necessary foundation for a legal system that reflected that consensus. Without a shared moral vision, coercion is the only means for securing law and order. As George Washington observed:

> Of all the dispositions and habits which lead to political prosperity, religion and morality are indispensable supports. In vain would that man claim the tribute of patriotism who should labor to subvert these great pillars of human happiness—these firmest props of the duties of men and citizens. . . . [R]eason and experience both forbid us to expect that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.

American statesmen and jurists have often joined Washington in acknowledging their debt to religion. As late as 1931 the Supreme Court referred to Americans as "a Christian people." Usually, though, the vocabulary of political piety has been more generic, with vague references to "a Higher Power," "a Supreme Being," "Providence," or "this nation under God." Congress and the armed services have long employed chaplains and the students at the military academies have sung an occasional hymn, but serious and

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specific theology was left to the numerous churches and the yet more numerous Bible-readers.

The current contrast between Europe's moribund state-sponsored churches and the relative vitality of American religion confirms the wisdom of the Founders' vision of nonestablishment and free devotion. Nonetheless, in late-20th-century America, the relationship between religion and government is uneasy and often troubled. Perhaps nowhere are the causes and consequences of the problems more evident than in public education. When the Constitution was written, public education was almost nonexistent. Certainly no Federal role in any national system was envisioned. Private schools meanwhile were usually under the control of some religious denomination. With the establishment of state educational systems in the 1800's, the constitutional prohibition against government-supported churches (reinterpreted to include state churches) began to have unforeseen consequences. For the first time America had a state institution which claimed and exercised a teaching authority usually reserved to churches. When attendance became mandatory, this teaching authority became nearly universal.

Of course, the public schools did not claim authority to pronounce on religious matters. But it is impossible to avoid religious issues in education. *Something* will be taught about what man is and what the universe means, and these are finally religious questions. Even to adopt a pedagogical posture of evading ultimate questions in history, literature, social studies, or science is to imply that these subjects can be adequately considered while ignoring religion. "All education," as T. S. Eliot has said, "is religious education."

Individualistic, Protestant America has been slow to recognize the significance of granting the state a monopoly on education. Catholics and some of the more ecclesiastically oriented Protestants have been more wary. At considerable sacrifice, they have maintained their own schools, even while compelled to pay taxes for the state system.

Long before "equal access" legislation, the place of religious authority in the public schools was a sticking point. Horace Mann and his allies fought tirelessly—and successfully—to free the public schools from denominational control. Mann argued that since Protestants of many sorts, Catholics, Jews, and unbelievers were all sending their children to the same schools, ecclesiastical authorities could properly exert no control over the curriculum. Nonetheless, until late in the 19th century and well into the 20th century in some areas, most public schools continued to provide some religious, vaguely Protestant, training. Students read the Bible, prayed, and sang hymns.

The issue of religion in the public schools became much more thorny when many of America's intellectual elite followed Darwin, Freud, and Marx into secular understandings of man and society while most of middle America remained deeply religious. Well positioned to affect the character of public education, skeptics have not only removed prayer, Bible reading, and most religious literature from the schools, they have also introduced a decidedly irreligious bias into texts and classes. The taxes of devout Christians and Jews thus often subsidize the destruction of their children's faith. Professor Richard Baer of Cornell University, a leading scholar on the teaching of values in the schools, believes that we now have a "state-sponsored disadvantage for religion." The public schools have evidently become part of a national antichurch.

Yet in weakening religion, the state has inadvertently undermined its own position. As Washington anticipated, declining appreciation among the young for the nation's religious and moral heritage has resulted in personal irresponsibility, criminality, and political instability. Supreme Court justices and other unelected officials have grown more arrogant in their use of power, but public respect for their decisions has diminished. As the national moral consensus based on religion has shrunk, the juvenile courts, prisons, and other instruments of coercion have had to expand. Greed and radical ideologies have moved from the margins to near the center of American politics.

Responding to the collapse of standards in secularizing schools, millions of parents have transferred their children into religious schools. This exodus has not been without opposition: religious schools have been harrassed in several states—most recently in Louisville, Nebraska—and families have been hindered in their attempts to educate children at home. In the years of declining enrollments ahead, the state school system will surely become much more aggressive in pursuing its fleeing victims. But many of the nation's newly created religious schools are—like the small, independent Protestant congregations they serve—ill positioned to stand against monolithic state bureaucracies and teachers' unions.

What role the ecclesiastical leadership of America's "main-line" denominations will play in the educational battles now shaping up is not yet clear. Their virtual abandonment of the gospel in recent years in favor of leftist and secularist agendas does not bode well. A national spokesman for the relatively conservative Lutheran Council in the USA recently declared that "there is greater harm in faulty theology and meanness of spirit [on the Religious Right] than in any existing humanism that opposes God and the teachings of the church." Such pastors will offer little consolation, much less help, to parents trying to bring up their children in the faith. Many American Catholic leaders, too, appear more concerned with capturing headlines than with instilling faith in young people. Still much more religious than public schools, Catholic schools are appreciably more secular and less orthodox than they were two decades ago. Yet few church leaders appear concerned about reversing this drift. The American bishops' proposed tax credits for parents who send their children to private schools is significantly lower on their agenda than declaiming on nuclear weapons or capitalism. Though such a measure would make it far easier to send children to church schools, the experience of Holland, where government subsidy for religious schools has resulted in virtual government control, has made many Americans cautious. Short of an unregulated voucher system, parental sacrifice may be the necessary price for independent religious schools. But it should be of some comfort that the church has usually flourished better under persecution than under the benevolent attention of the state.

—*Bryce J. Christensen*

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The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America

Richard John Neuhaus: *The Naked Public Square: Religion and Democracy in America;* Wm. B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, MI.

James Hitchcock is professor of history at St. Louis University. His latest book is The Pope and the Jesuits, *published by the National Committee of Catholic Laymen.*

George M. Marsden is professor of history at Calvin College and editor of Evangelism in Modern America *(Eerdmans).*

by James Hitchcock

In writing *The Naked Public Square,* Richard John Neuhaus, a Lutheran pastor, was undoubtedly conscious of Lutheranism's potentially central role in mediating the religious-moral battles now so conspicuous on the American scene. Liturgical and dogmatic, yet firmly evangelical, mainstream in some of its American manifestations and quasi–sectarian in others, running the gamut from the most sophisticated theology to simple pietism, Lutheranism perhaps holds within itself the possibility of refereeing the conflicting claims of Catholics and Evangelicals, liberals and fundamentalists.

Although Neuhaus suggests Lutheranism's possible role briefly and tentatively towards the end of the book, there is a sense that he also realizes that it is unlikely. His church's modest numbers may themselves deny it such a role, along with its concentration in a relatively few geographical areas. Its tradition is not one of vigorous action in the public realm, nor of far-reaching thought about the relationship of religion and the state.

Before alluding to the potential of his own denomination, Neuhaus discusses the "Catholic moment" which he says by rights should now have come in America. For, although Catholicism suffers from the obvious disabilities of the Reformation legacy, especially the lingering sense that it is an alien faith in a Protestant land, it does possess the numbers, the traditions, and the political and intellectual sophistication which might enable it to oversee the filling up of the square.

Here the author is too optimistic. He rightly points out that the election of John F. Kennedy was not the Catholic moment it has often been thought, because, as Neuhaus pithily puts it, Kennedy "reassured the electo-

(continued on page 7)

by George M. Marsden

My hometown in central Pennsylvania has long had a naked public square. Today the most noteworthy buildings on the square are the Colonial Bar and Grill, a Seven-Eleven, and a barbershop. Religion is nowhere to be seen. I am not, I must confess, embarrassed about this, except aesthetically. It reflects a tradition going back to the founding of the town in the 1750's. At that time the town planners deeded lots to the Lutherans, the Presbyterians, and the Moravians. Unlike European precedents, however, none of these churches were to be on the public square. This geographical distancing symbolized a more basic principle. Religion was encouraged by the town founders; but it was also distanced from the formal center of civic activity. Eighteenth-century Pennsylvania was justly celebrated as a haven of religious liberty and was a model for the American experiment.

The naked public square, then, might be presented as a symbol of what is right about the American tradition of religion and politics just as easily as it can be used, as Neuhaus uses it, as an image for what is going wrong. At least, it is not immediately obvious why we should share Neuhaus's alarm. Neuhaus's alarm seems based primarily on his repeated assertion that the exclusion of religious discourse from public life will create a moral vacuum that will be filled by state totalitarianism. But is there historical evidence for this claim? If one considers the classic totalitarian regimes in nations with major Christian heritage, such as Russia, Italy, Germany, Cuba, or Argentina, public religious discourse does not seem to have been unusually lacking prior to the rise of such regimes

Nonetheless, Neuhaus has a point

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(Hitchcock continued)
rate that he was not a very serious Catholic." If anything, his election delayed the Catholic moment by a generation, and possibly forestalled it permanently.

Neuhaus goes on to say that he disagrees with those who say that the Catholic Church began to unravel at the moment its spiritual son was elected to the nation's highest office. Catholicism's "silly season" is now behind it, Neuhaus insists. But that is a misapprehension. There is perhaps less overt "silliness" now than there was 10 years ago (e.g., not as much is heard about Mass being celebrated amidst balloons and dancing girls, with pizza and Coke for the eucharistic elements). However, that is because in so many ways the trendiest notions of the counterculture and the New Left are now simply taken for granted, even if in somewhat less flamboyant form.

The working philosophy of the most articulate and influential nuns, for example, is simply the most extreme kind of feminism. If particular religious orders, male and female, can be said to have an official creed, its tenets would have to include unblinking support for every self-proclaimed revolutionary movement in the "third world" and the working assumption that capitalism and the United States are the source of most of the evil in the world. Mainstream Catholic theology to a large extent defines itself by what it rejects in the Catholic tradition. In the midst of all this the majority of the American bishops concede to the radicals as much as they possibly can without formally transgressing official doctrine.

Although Neuhaus is aware of the internal problems of the various churches, more attention might have been given to the way in which the square has been denuded in large part because those who traditionally kept it full, especially the churches, acquiesced as its furniture was carted away as debris. Or, correlatively, those whose traditional task was to keep the square filled simply lost their sense of authority. American Catholicism arrived at this point later than did the mainstream Protestants, but its malaise is probably almost as deep, relieved only by a strong pope who does have the power, ultimately, to effect a transformation in the leadership of that church.

If the square is empty in part because Americans do not know what to fill it with, it is also true that an empty square tends to suck the contents out of the communities, including churches, which border it. Mainstream religious leaders now keep glancing nervously into the square to judge what is or is not appropriate for them to do or say. The naked square functions as a religious Gresham's Law, the ultimate in spiritual lowest common denominators.

Although the book will probably be denounced by some liberals as aiming to violate strict separation of church and state, it is in fact a work of what can be called "the extreme middle." Neuhaus moderately and intelligently raises the necessary, if neglected, questions about the relation of belief and the public order and calmly reveals the sophistries and unexamined assumptions by which a dogmatic secularism has often been imposed. At the same time, he is clearly uneasy with the "religious new right"—the Moral Majority, etc.—whom he credits with having legitimate concerns but whose dogmatism and lack of sophistication he regards as dangerous to the public order.

The problem, as Neuhaus recognizes elsewhere in the book, is that genuine religion is by nature a volatile substance, not easily captured in the categories of "civility" and compromise. As both religious and secular history have shown abundantly, moral revivals, whether overtly religious or chiefly secular in character, quickly manifest themselves in "extreme" forms.

No great moral change in American life has occurred through reasoned discourse and careful and responsible negotiation of competing claims. Every such event has involved bruising conflict and intense polarization. Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the successful secular movements of the past quarter century—civil rights, the antiwar movement, feminism, environmentalism, etc.

Pastor Neuhaus has presented a carefully thought-out analysis with which no fair-minded person could seriously quarrel. It seems unlikely, however, that he has provided the prescription by which the problem will finally be resolved. cc

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(Marsden continued)
which makes his highly stimulating book also important. Some sort of moral consensus seems essential for the health and survival of a free society. At present it is difficult to see what holds together such a consensus in America. Popular American beliefs seem too relativistic and individualistic to sustain a substantial consensus indefinitely. Neuhaus is thus sounding an important call by urging us to attend to the moral dimensions of public philosophy.

On the surface, Neuhaus's proposal looks like a plea simply to have more religious input in public life. His problem: religion and religiously based morality have been too much excluded from the public square. His apparent solution: put more religion and religious-moral discourse into public life. Nonetheless, Neuhaus's book is dense, both in the sense of being tightly packed with stimulating remarks and in the sense of it being difficult to unravel from these the exact line of argument.

If one does look closely, one finds that Neuhaus is not advocating infusing public discourse either with more religion in a general sense or with the Judeo-Christian tradition in a general sense. Rather, he seems interested in getting only a certain *sort* of Judeo-Christian tradition into the public discourse about morality. This becomes clear when we look at his treatment of the two major recent contenders for religious influence in American public life. The most recent, the Moral Majority, he credits several times with having touched a tripwire that has set off needed public discussion of certain moral-religious issues. He also emphasizes that he does not approve of the *sort* of religious discourse the Moral Majority has entered into the public debate. Truly public religion, he argues cogently, cannot be based on appeal to private authority. Public discourse must be based on arguments accessible to the public. Fundamentalists, he says, fail on this score. Presumably, they disqualify themselves from public discourse not simply because

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they appeal to the authority of Scripture (which many Christians and Jews would want to do), but because they insist that their conclusions do not allow room for discussion.

Neuhaus indicts the politically liberal establishment of main-line Protestantism even more severely. They are eliminated in the search for a public philosophy because they too often fail Neuhaus's requirement that one must believe that, on balance and considering the alternatives, America is a force for good in the world. At this point, and in related remarks, it becomes clear that Neuhaus is further limiting his call for religion in public life to a call only for religion that will yield a particular political stance. He wants a Republican public square.

Having eliminated the whole religious far right and also the Protestant left, we are left with a much narrower conception of religion in the public square. The only people remaining are those who are moderate religiously, lean to the right politically, and are duly modest about their views, after the model of Reinhold Niebuhr. These are often fine people. But can this group of right-leaning centrists establish a religiously based consensus for American culture, law, and politics? Neuhaus points out that there are many Catholics, Lutherans, and evangelicals who might make up this group. But if we eliminate those politically on the left, the ideological right, and the religiously or politically indifferent, how many remain? Neuhaus's proposals are too sophisticated to have wide public appeal. What he really seems to want is a religiously based moral leadership by an "elite" (as he puts it) who meet his criteria.

This is a quite different proposal from Neuhaus's seemingly general call for an across-the-board religious input into public debate. What is puzzling to me is how the sophisticated Neuhausian elite hope to control the religious ideologues on the right and the left. More religion in public life might well destroy the already weakened consensus in American public philosophy.

Neuhaus arrives at his puzzling and possibly self-defeating conclusion, I think, because of a faulty premise in his argument. "Religion in our popular life," he says, "is the morality-bearing part of culture, and in that sense the heart of culture." Working from this premise, he argues that the issue today is that of morality or lack thereof in the public square. Morality then is, according to the premise, dependent on religion; so the real issue is whether "the religiously grounded values of the American people are ruled out of order in public discourse." For one thing, ruling out religiously grounded values is nearly impossible. More important though, is that the issue in America today is not between religiously based morality and nonreligious nonmorality. Rather it is between competing systems of morality. Secularists do not lack moral standards. For instance, left-leaning secularists take strong morally based stands on behalf of the poor, for the rights of minorities, for the rights of individuals, or against various types of violence. One does not have to be religious to see these as questions of morality. The same can be said about the moral-political positions of the American right. Sometimes their moral basis is derived from religion, sometimes from secular sources. So Neuhaus's premise of "no religion, no morality" seems incorrect. Hence his solution—that to put more religion directly into the public debate is the only way to revive a morally grounded public philosophy—simply lacks the basis he supposes.

What I see missing from his analysis is sufficient regard for just the point that led the 18th-century founders of this nation symbolically to *distance, not separate by a wall*, religion from the public square. Public morality will arise substantially from the religious convictions of the populace. But that does not imply that religions should (or that mutually contradictory religions or religiously based moralities could) provide the best frame of reference for the public *debate* about morality.

Neuhaus's analysis, despite some central weaknesses, contains many insights on religion, politics, and morality. Certainly he is right that Judeo-Christian religion often contributes mightily to the moral health and stability of a culture. But if we distinguish polity from culture, then it is not clear that the more directly religion shapes the polity the better that polity will be. This is not to deny that people should be encouraged to relate their religion to their morality and politics. Neuhaus is also right in saying that religion should not be systematically excluded from public debate. But the primary ground for such political debate should be sought, as it was in the 18th century, in the common principles that many people share because of their common humanity and similar heritages. Such debate has the possibility of fostering some consensus between secularists and theists concerning public philosophy, rather than further dividing them over questions of religious authority. The public square then will not be devoid of coherently defended moral principles; but neither will it be needlessly polarized by religious conflict, which can, as Northern Ireland and Lebanon illustrate, destroy the public square itself. cc

IN THE MAIL

***My Darling Clementine*, directed by John Ford; edited by Robert Lyons: Rutgers University Press; New Brunswick, NJ.** Once again Wyatt Earp and Doc Holliday gun it out with the Clantons at the O.K. Corral. The transcript of the film, together with portions of the shooting script, reveal a director who was not too scrupulous with historical fact but who believed that Westerns should "have a basically moral quality." That was long before *The Wild Bunch*.

***Galina: A Russian Story* by Galina Vishnevskaya; Harcourt Brace Jovanovich; San Diego.** The autobiography of a Russian opera star who—before leaving for the West a decade ago—helped others, including Solzhenitsyn, raise their voices against communist oppression. Bravo.

***Peace Now: Blueprint for National Suicide* by Dan Nimrod; Dawn; Montreal.** Recent years have seen the rise of a new Jewish movement in Israel, America, and Europe of those (mostly on the left) who believe that the time has come for Israel to negotiate for peace with the Palestinians. Dan Nimrod fears that this movement—like the American antiwar movement of the Vietnam era—will bring only the peace of surrender.

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Novelizing Novelists *by Fred Chappell*

"Biting my truant pen, beating myself for spite, fool, said my muse to me, look in thy heart and write."

—Sir Philip Sidney

Anthony Burgess: *Enderby's Dark Lady;* McGraw-Hill; New York.

William Golding: *The Paper Men;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

Thrice-rendered Enderby slenderly lives again. In the 1974 novel, *The Clockwork Testament*, Anthony Burgess dispatched to eternity his gross, grotty, gastric poet; New York City slaughtered the luckless English bard with a heart attack. But here he is again in *Enderby's Dark Lady*. "I think we have to look at it this way," Burgess says. "All fictional events are hypotheses, and the condition of Enderby's going to New York would be that he should die there. If the hypothesis is unfulfilled, he does not have to die."

In other words, the wildly self-absorbed Dickensian character who first appeared some 20 years ago has shrunk to the level of a pretext. Burgess has discovered additional targets for satire. Why not dig up Enderby, set him to writing the libretto "for a ridiculous musical about Shakespeare in a fictitious theater in Indianapolis"?

Not a bad idea, at first glance. Enderby has lost nothing of his talent for dyspeptic observation and bilious remark. Here are his impressions of a Midwestern patroness of the arts:

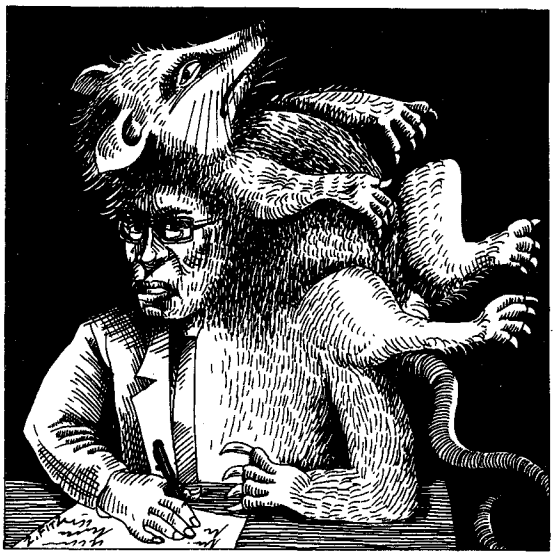
> He knew that Mr. Schoenbaum was dead from making money. Mrs. Schoenbaum was clearly enjoying her widowhood. She wore a kind of harem dress of silk trousers and brocaded sort of cutdown caftan. Her silver hair was frozen into a photographed stormtossed effect, clicked into sempiternal tempestuousness on a Wuthering Heights of the American imagination. Her eyelids were gold-dusted and her lips white-lacquered. Her nose looked as though its natural butt had been surgically cut off. She took Enderby by the hand and led him into a salon. . . . 'I'm sure,' she said, 'you know nobody here.'

Enderby's Dark Lady contains numerous passages of equal malice and brilliance, and in these passages lies all the justification for the novel. Enderby himself becomes paler, more ghostly, with each new incarnation. Burgess seems to have lost interest in him as a character and now uses him merely as an observer. He has not even bothered to tell a new story. It is repeatedly —repetitiously—Enderby's fate to meet a belligerently contemporary avatar of the Muse, and then to be impotent with her and to show himself puling and ludicrous in her eyes. Surely the point of this story is strong on first telling; Burgess has now told it three times, and it has lost force and plausibility.

The structure of Enderby's adventure has become arbitrary. *Enderby's Dark Lady* begins with a short story set in Elizabethan times; the last chapter is science fiction. According to this odd epilogue, no one wrote Shakespeare's plays; the poet himself cribbed them from time travelers carrying copies of his work.

Sandwiched between these strange episodes is the picture of Enderby in Indiana, wrestling with insipidly goofy song lyrics, down-home black culture, provincial theater, weak American tea, hard American slang, and the puzzling April Elgar, latest incarnation of the Muse with whom Enderby is doomed to fail.

In this encounter Burgess fails also. His sureness in female characterization deserts him when he comes to draw the celebrated black singer. It is clear that Burgess admires the real-life model April Elgar is drawn from (probably more than one model, "Elgar" suggesting *enigma variations*), and that he believes that Enderby can become infatuated with her. But he does not convince us that there was ever a chance of success, and so there is no suspense. The anticlimactic conclusion is known from the instant that April and Enderby meet. If April is the slovenly poet's "cruelest" encounter, "stirring dull roots with spring rain," she is also the most unreachable. A gray hopelessness vitiates that whole aspect of the story.



What we are left with is Burgess's wit, which is rich, dark, bookish, sometimes strained, and almost always telling. Enderby having become what he is, there is little point now in wit at

Fred Chappell is a novelist and poet whose most recent book is Castle Tzingal *(LSU Press).*

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his expense, but Burgess will be able to produce entertaining books almost at will simply by shuttling this flatulent figure about the globe and allowing him to say what he sees. Not the grandest of ambitions, but Burgess is conserving his ambition for other books.

If Burgess treats his literary types with something less than full Christian sympathy, William Golding, in *The Paper Men*, is positively savage. This is a curious quality to remark, since Golding's narrative line, for about half the length of the novel, is gentler and more humorous than Burgess's. For quite a while, in fact, *The Paper Men* is reminiscent of such Henry James stories as "The Lesson of the Master" and "The Figure in the Carpet."

Wilfred Barclay is an English literary lion stalked by an American academic, Rick Tucker, who proposes to write the Official Biography of Barclay and needs only Barclay's signature on a contract. Tucker is armed with grants from American institutions and with the financial support of a mysterious philanthropist named Halliday. And Tucker is determined. Look here, he has even offered up his wife Mary Lou as bait.

But he has mistaken the nature of his prey. Overwhelming literary success has destroyed Barclay. He is still lecherous at 60 years of age, but recognizes his broken capacities. His marriage has failed, and one reason for its failure was a hilariously improper revelation made by Tucker. Barclay is alcoholic and has begun to slide into hallucinatory states. Although he eludes Tucker and flees literally round the world, he seems to see the scholar everywhere, a pursuer inescapable.

Now a story like *The Paper Men*, one which begins plausibly enough and then shades into hysteric exaggeration, offers ripe opportunity for humor, and there is plenty of harsh satire in the book. But Golding has chosen to force his readers' credulities, to take his characters seriously both as persons and as allegoric figures, to push his plot into madness and violence, to try to deepen his implications.

The author's ambitions may well be more than such a slight narrative can convincingly convey. The plot of *The Paper Men* is the stuff of farce; Barclay and Tucker are such unequaled fools, such spiteful caricatures, that larger implication simply will not cling to them; they shed profundity the way a Nobel laureate sheds unfavorable reviews. Barclay's wild mental states —drunken hallucination and amnesia —seem only an easy method of forcing urgency and tension upon a story that is not so much in need of these qualities as of calmness, leisure, and forbearance.

Calmer qualities of narrative would allow readers to gain some affection for Barclay and Tucker; and that would be the last thing Golding would desire. Burgess and Golding share a need to shape their literary figures as shallowly and distastefully as possible.

Why is it so common a practice in fiction to portray writers as singularly unattractive figures? D. H. Lawrence, Aldous Huxley, Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Mann, Dickens—the list is a long one indeed of authors who denigrate their own fictional writers. One is hard put to name authors who treat them benevolently. (Trollope, perhaps, and Balzac.)

In the books at hand there is a nettlesome pudency about the vocation of writing, perhaps because the books are concerned with literary figures. If one thought—with deliberate naiveté, as Wilfred Barclay does—that writing was at one remove from reality, then writing about writers would be at a second or even a third remove since writers would have to be flimsy, unreal creatures, "paper men."

This is nonsense, of course. A writer is as real a person as a tax auditor or a beautician. He has as many character faults as they, and it is unlikely that he has more. Yet fiction writers are necessarily moralists, and it is the curse of the moralist that he must begin by looking at himself in that cold light in which no one looks good. But to express so much raw self-disgust marks a failure of nerve; the stringent dispassion has been lost. If Enderby and Barclay were cobblers or pickpockets, Burgess and Golding would be much more forgiving toward them. Such obduracy as is shown here results in an odd mawkishness, and *The Paper Men* —for all its edgy skill—is at last a self-pitying book. cc

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles of Culture:*

Values for Money

"The great national debates are not really on foreign policy—that is only what interests the media. Most people are deeply into themselves. Far more of them are intimately concerned about jogging and weight loss than with the opposing kinds of regimes in Nicaragua and El Salvador. The books that sell and the programs that are listened to have not much to do with capitalism versus communism: they are about personal experience in capital letters, raised to a kind of religion. This being the case, sometime or other we will have to make sense out of our ideas and tastes and styles. The whole realm of culture, once safely the province of universities and other harmless places, has suddenly become the realm of the passionate majority."

—from "The New Problems of Paying for Art"
by Ronald Berman

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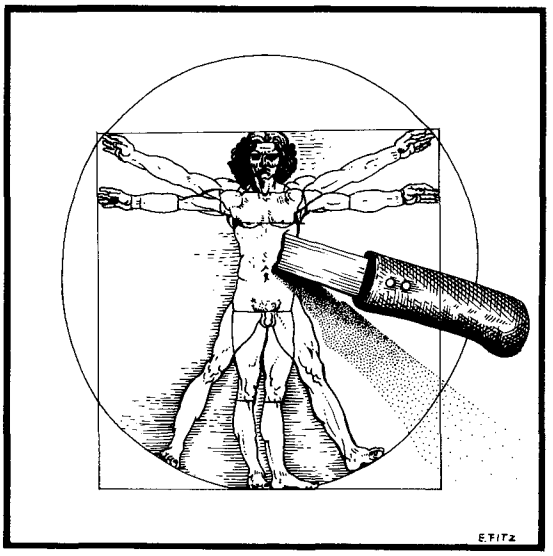
De Gaulle: Man With a Chest *by Will Morrisey*

"The Courage we desire and prize is not the Courage to die decently, but to live manfully. This, when by God's grace it has been given, lies deep in the soul; like genial heat, fosters all other virtues and gifts; without it they could not live."

—Thomas Carlyle



Don Cook: *Charles de Gaulle: A Biography;* G. P. Putnam's Sons; New York.

"The head rules the belly through the chest," C. S. Lewis writes. Reason cannot rule appetites directly; it needs what the Greeks called *thymos*, the soul's "spirited element," to rule the appetites so that reason can go free. Spiritedness cares for oneself and for those like oneself. Refined, it animates patriotism, courage, honor; at its best it animates magnanimity, "greatness of soul." Unrefined, it animates warlikeness, rage, egoism; at its worst it causes madness. Lewis describes modern democratic "intellectuals" as "men without chests." Their heads, however well-trained, remain ineffectual. Our intellectuals lack "heart"—not only the compassion they feebly praise but the courage they ridicule, nervously, as *machismo*.

Few political men have opposed this dispiritedness. Charles de Gaulle was perhaps the greatest to do so. His latest biographer, an American journalist, describes a man of *thymos* caught in but also defying, sometimes exploiting, the entropic forces of the modern age. On the force commonly taken to symbolize late modernity, Cook writes that de Gaulle

> . . . had not the slightest interest in the question of control of nuclear weapons, in nuclear disarmament, in a test-ban treaty, in the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, or in any of the treaties that were spawned in Geneva. . . . He had no interest in think-tank theories about the use of nuclear weapons or the risks of one country triggering another into holocaust. He had only one theory and that was nuclear retaliation.

During the 1962 Cuban missile crisis, de Gaulle met American and Soviet representatives. To Kennedy's envoy, Dean Acheson, he said, "You may tell the President that if there is a war, France will be with you. But there will be no war." He added, characteristically, "I must note that I have been advised, but not consulted." With Serge Vinogradov, Khruschev's ambassador to France, de Gaulle deployed fewer words but greater irony:

> It was de Gaulle's invariable custom to open such meetings merely by saying, 'Well, Mr. Ambassador, I am listening.' Vinogradov, referring to his telegram of instructions, launched into his warning of the nuclear destruction that France was risking. De Gaulle sat immobile, expressionless and silent, not responding at all. Vinogradov kept going, but de Gaulle's silence was crushing. At last the Soviet ambassador ran out of things to say.
>
> De Gaulle then rose from behind his desk with heavy and ponderous motion, stretched out his hand in farewell to Vinogradov and said:
>
> *'Hélas, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur, nous mourirons ensemble! Au revoir, Monsieur l'Ambassadeur.'* (Alas, Mr. Ambassador, we will die together! Goodbye, Mr. Ambassador.)

Thymos serves reason here in two ways: it defends reason against tyranny, including the intellectual tyranny totalitarians seek to impose; more subtly, it defends the mind from excessive fear, and allowed de Gaulle to see that the Soviets are not likely to risk Moscow for the sake of missile bases in the Caribbean. The complementary insight is de Gaulle's famous suspicion that the United States might not risk its existence for the sake of France. He told Eisenhower, "I know, as you yourself know, what a nation is. It can help another but it cannot identify itself with another." De Gaulle accordingly ordered the construction of France's own nuclear arsenal, forcing any would-be attackers to consider how much they want to risk for the sake of conquering France. Thus *thymos* and practical reason allied themselves in the service of moderation —or, at least, restraint.

Thymos defends its own. Even when the schoolboy de Gaulle played with toy soldiers he insisted, "France is mine!" Wounded and captured by the Germans during the Great War, he used his enforced confinement to study the enemy's language, "return-[ing] home from thirty-two months as a POW with a suitcase full of materials for future writings and lectures" —many of which would warn against German military resurgence. In 1919 he saw action in Poland, participating in "the miracle of the Vistula" when Polish troops and foreign volunteers unexpectedly defeated the Red Army

Will Morrisey is the author of Reflections on De Gaulle *(University Press of America).*

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and saved Poland from foreign domination. Decorated by the Polish government, de Gaulle evidently regarded Poland as an exception to the perfidious general run of foreign countries. He condemned the Yalta settlement from the beginning and, as late as 1967, visited Gdansk and said, "The obstacles that you think are insurmountable today, you will without any doubt surmount them. You know what I mean." Poland too had become "his."

No tyrant, de Gaulle admired *thymos* in others. In the 1920's he saw the French colonies in the Mideast and wrote, "My impression is that we haven't really made much impact here, and that the people are as alien to us—and we to them—as they ever were." The French must therefore either compel obedience or "get out." His decision to disband France's colonial empire followed from this recognition of both the strength and the limits of *thymos*.

"A statesman is needed." De Gaulle wrote that on May 3, 1940 to the Third Republic's last prime minister, Paul Reynaud, who proved unequal to the need. As the nazis conquered France and his mentor, Marshall Pétain, capitulated, de Gaulle reacted simply to France's "men without chests": "I saw treason before my eyes, and my heart refused in disgust to recognize it as victorious." Not only military and political timeservers but many intellectual luminaries endorsed Pétain; these included Gide, Mauriac, and Claudel.

> In those early days, it was not men of experience or leadership, it was not the intellectuals or politicians or administrators or serving officers who were the first Gaullists and rallied to the Cross of Lorraine. They did not come from the châteaux or the cathedrals, but from the parish churches and the synagogues, the French of the Paris Métro, the fishing villages, the factories, for whom all was clear and simple.

When de Gaulle founded Free France in London, less than one-sixth of the French then on British soil joined him; those likely to be on foreign soil were unlikely to respond to a simple call to honor.

By 1941, "he had made up his mind that the war would be long, that Britain and the Allies would win, and that his priority from then on would be to claw back everything he could for a victory for France." The clawing among de Gaulle and Churchill, Roosevelt, and the anti-Gaullist French drew blood. Although Churchill quarreled angrily with him (going so far as to threaten, "If you obstruct me, I shall liquidate you!") de Gaulle found Roosevelt and the French elites more consistently hostile. The American President dreamed of a new, postwar state, "Wallonia," to be fabricated from "the Walloon parts of Belgium with Luxembourg, Alsace-Lorraine and part of northern France." Although he considers various explanations of Roosevelt's allergy to de Gaulle, Cook finally decides that "there can be no rationale or explanation of what amounted to a personal obsession." (Perhaps Roosevelt, who exemplified the American liberal's ambivalence toward *thymos*, resented a man "of one piece," a man who at once blocked the liberal's ambitions but who did not share the liberal's moral reservations concerning ambition.) As for the French, during the war de Gaulle contended with the old right (the Vichyites condemned him to death *in absentia*); after the liberation "it was a struggle for local power between the Communists and the Gaullists," a struggle de Gaulle won by the spirited expedient of ordering the Communists to the front lines. It was the postwar exhaustion of *thymos* that caused de Gaulle to resign as prime minister.

> Although de Gaulle could be a master of any parliamentary debate he chose to enter, he was never cut out for the maneuvers and cut-and-thrust of parliamentary democracy. . . . It was not his idea of how to run a government.

The French viewed his departure with relief and did not expect him to return. When he did, it was of course on his terms. Foremost among these was a new constitution, a presidential regime that ended parliamentarism. The men without chests, talkers who confused action with the force of inertia, found themselves subordinate once more to the man of *thymos*.

In previous books, Cook has written extensively on World War II, and 60 percent of this book concerns the war and its aftermath. The chapters on de Gaulle's founding and defense of the Fifth Republic are well supplemented by Bernard Ledwidge's recent biography (*De Gaulle*; St. Martin's Press) and by several chapters in Malraux's *Le Miroir des Limbes* (Holt, Rinehart & Winston). De Gaulle's constant theme during those years, *la grandeur*, inspired fear and hatred, admiration and ridicule. Cook does not quite understand de Gaulle's intention, but he does present the words and actions of a statesman attempting to bring a thoroughly modernized populace to the unmodern virtues of courage and moderation, a statesman forced to use modern tools for unmodern ends.

Cook gives the two customary explanations of de Gaulle's failure to complete his second term as president: from 1958 to 1968, French university enrollments tripled and de Gaulle did not sufficiently anticipate the resulting tensions; in 1968, the Soviets crushed Czechoslovakia's experiment with civil liberties, thus refuting de Gaulle's claim that Soviet ideology mattered less than Russian nationality. In both instances, the man of *thymos* underestimated the power of ideologies. (The French university students were not only more numerous; a significant fraction of them put on ideological costumes, stitching together patches of anarchism, pop psychology, and the teachings of Mao Zedong.) De Gaulle rightly considered these ideologies absurd. He wrongly dismissed them as irrelevant to serious politics. That is, he underestimated the power of intellectual absurdity in human life, a power that never lasts at its peak but reappears with the persistence of dandelions. If allied with reason, *thymos* can rule the appetites. But in late modernity the appetites have themselves made alliance with reason, using reason to build ideologies, distinguished from religions or philosophies by their egalitarianism.

Statesmen are still needed. cc

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The Mind of a Manichean *by Brian Murray*

"Religion, Love, Nature, Polity—All select things have a reference to Mysticism."
—Novalis

Czeslaw Milosz: *The Land of Ulro;* Farrar, Straus & Giroux; New York.

In 1980 Czeslaw Milosz was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. At the time he had been living in Berkeley, California, for just over 20 years. But it is safe to say that until Milosz became a Nobel laureate, very few readers of serious literature were on even the most casual terms with his poetry, or with his less acclaimed, though no less erudite and subtle, prose. The reasons for this neglect are not difficult to fathom. Milosz, who is 73 years old, writes almost exclusively in his native Polish, and only in the last three or four years have translations of his work become readily available. Moreover, Milosz has absolutely no taste for the sort of shameless self-promotion that in this country has aided and abetted so many literary successes. He has not posed in a wrestling costume for *Vanity Fair*. He has not appeared on *The Tonight Show* or in one of Warren Beatty's movies. Indeed, shortly after he learned that he had won the Nobel Prize, Milosz bluntly told reporters: "I don't want to be famous! . . . I prefer to continue my strange and private occupations."

Still, Milosz has not been entirely invisible. He has written often of his passions and prejudices, and of the social and historical circumstances that shaped his artistic sensibility. In *Native Realm: A Search for Self-Definition* (1968), Milosz traces his descent from a fairly distinguished Lithuanian family of minor property-holding gentry; he describes how he spent his formative years quite contentedly in the lush, fertile, almost paradisaic region of Vilnius, at that time part of Poland. He notes that as a youth he was very much intrigued by the beauty and mystery of the natural world, and by extension in a wide range of scientific and theological questions. Accordingly, while still in high school, Milosz took it upon himself to study an assortment of apostasies and heresies that, in the Middle Ages at least, sparked considerable debate. Milosz's writings prove that he still understands the subtle differences between, say, Albigensianism and Catharism. They also show that he is himself particularly attracted to the concept of a metaphysical and religious dualism—to the Manichean theory that a benevolent God has for some inscrutable reason leased the world of matter in its entirety to Satan, the cause of all Evil. In *Native Realm* Milosz concedes that his "propensity" to Manicheanism remains.

Milosz also admits that, as a student in Poland during the 1930's, he came to regard Marxism as "vital and bracing" and so "turned into a Red." During World War II Milosz fought the nazis as a member of the Polish resistance movement; after the war he assumed the position of cultural attaché in Washington and Paris for the Soviet-controlled "People's Republic of Poland." As he explains at some length in the concluding chapters of *Native Realm*—as well as in the Preface to his 1953 "speculative essay," *The Captive Mind*—Milosz quit his diplomatic post in 1951 and went into exile in Paris after deciding that he could no longer stomach the myriad tyrannies of Stalinism, or compromise his literary independence for the sake of "socialist realism." For "socialist realism," notes Milosz in *The Captive Mind*, is "not merely an aesthetic theory to which the writer, the musician, the painter or the theatrical producer is obliged to adhere." It involves, by implication, "the whole Leninist-Stalinist doctrine." It "forbids what has in every age been the writer's essential task—to look at the world from an independent viewpoint, to tell the truth as he sees it, and so to keep watch and ward in the interest of society as a whole."

In 1961 the multilingual Milosz assumed the position of Professor of Slavic Languages and Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. In *Visions From San Francisco Bay* (1969) he continues to frankly advertise his biases as he meditates on life on the West Coast during a decade of unprecedented social turbulence. Here he records his distaste for the "Worship of the Golden Calf, the rule of the dollar" that he finds pandemic in the United States. He condemns the American media for its employment of a language "which makes everything shallow and false"; for its putting a premium on "garishness, brutality, sex"; for its creation and celebration of a very vulgar "mass norm." He complains too that America lacks, among other things, an "historical imagination" which he suggests "is perhaps why in American films both ancient Romans and astronauts from the year 3000 look and act like boys from Kentucky."

But Milosz makes it clear in *Visions From San Francisco Bay* that he should not be counted among those many leftist artists and intellectuals who automatically equate America with all that is ugly and corrupt in the modern world. For example, he writes of his admiration for the discipline and the simple earnestness—the "virtue"—that he finds displayed at American country fairs, and he mocks the typical urban-bred "long-haired revolution-

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ary" for obtusely assuming that farmers are invariably "yokels and provincial boors." Later he asserts that he has "no desire to be one of the elect dragging the masses by force to Utopia"; and he suggests—quite daringly, given his residence in Berkeley and the temper of those times—that "youth brought up in affluence, masquerading in beggars' clothing and revolutionary ideas, commands less of my respect than hardworking lumberjacks, miners, bus drivers, and bricklayers, whose mentality arouses scorn in the young."

Indeed, at one point, Milosz skewers a student, a "young idiot" who once quite seriously asked him "how life in Sacramento differed from life in a concentration camp." This dolt, observes Milosz, "had never faced starvation, he took a bath every day, drove a car, an old one but his own; he could take the works of Lenin and Mao Tse-tung from the library." In short, he took his freedom and his cozy well-being for granted; and, like most suburban statists, was woefully ignorant of the way in which "planned" societies are really run. "Collective administration," observes Milosz elsewhere in *Visions From San Francisco Bay*, "only works in a few cases, because people have only enough energy and interest for a couple of weeks of revolutionary elation, after which the professionals, the bureaucrats, take over the onerous study of making decisions. And how to control them so that they defend the workers' interests, and not those at the top of the governing apparatus, remains a mystery."

In *Visions From San Francisco Bay* Milosz restates his conviction that the world of matter is fundamentally a world of pain; that Nature is—as Tennyson put it in "Maud"—"one with rapine." But he stresses that he is at the same time much too "immersed in humanity," and too respectful of man and his often-transcendent aspirations to be easily impressed by the sort of absurdist "black gallows humor" which tends to trivialize the human condition. Not surprisingly then, Milosz pays tribute to Walt Whitman for emphasizing the pleasure of being "alive among the living," for extolling and blessing "the human element and its irrepressible rush" even as "the poets of Europe were cursing the *cité infernale*, populated like Hades with restless spectres." In fact, "even before I read Whitman," writes Milosz, "his sense of things compelled me to search for words and was the source of all my curiosities and passions."

More of those curiosities and passions are documented in *The Land of Ulro*, a book Milosz describes as "difficult" since it deals primarily with his "spiritual adventures." In the book's Preface, Milosz warns his British and American readers that they have just picked up his "one maverick work," and are about to enter a "bizarre tangle" of digressive meditations on subjects that are sometimes quite abstruse—meditations that are replete with allusions to writers, some of them quite eccentric, who are virtually unknown outside Central Europe. *The Land of Ulro*, he adds, is "my rebellion against the reasonableness of my essayistic prose, in which I felt much more constrained than in my poetry."

Milosz is not kidding. In the first half of *The Land of Ulro* he either focuses on or alludes to the works of, among others, Jerzy Wyszomirski, Witold Gombrowicz, Adam Mickiewicz, Nikolai Chernyshevsky, and his own distant cousin, Oscar Venceslas de Lubicz Milosz. In the second half, he manages to analyze—or at least mention—Freudianism, Socinianism, Christian mysticism, scientific materialism, and secular humanism, which he describes as an "utter failure." Along the way, Milosz outlines the history of "our modern 'obscure' poetry." He discusses the accomplishments of Samuel Beckett (whom he rather admires) and Simone Weil (whom he admires considerably more). Weil—who died in 1943 at the age of 34—brooded intensely and intelligently on the nature of God and the purpose of man, laying "particular stress," as Milosz notes, "on existence as pain." Because of her "lucidity of thought and style," Weil, Milosz suggests, "towers above those Christians acceding to the 'demands of the age.'"

All the name-dropping, all the expository twisting and turning does not in the end ruin *The Land of Ulro*, because throughout this idiosyncratic work Milosz does address himself to the sort of questions that are not generally broached by writers who shoot for the sort of big sales and celebrity that Milosz shuns. Among them: What ought to be the aim of the Christian Church in these utterly secular times? What ought to be literature's aim in a world that is in many ways as spiritually moribund and as cheerless as the Land of Ulro that William Blake depicts in *Milton* and *The Four Zoas*?

Milosz, a Roman Catholic, says he feels "a profound gratitude that there is *Una Sancta Catholica Ecclesia*." But as he makes clear in *The Land of Ulro*, he is far less grateful for the process of liturgical reform and theological liberalization that have in the postwar years utterly transformed and perhaps in some ways trivialized the character of

REVISIONS

Indigestion

To get the flavor of *Eating Together: Recollections & Recipes* by Lillian Hellman and Peter Feibleman (Little, Brown; Boston), begin with the wandering reminiscences and aimless gourmandizing of one rich and widely acclaimed playwright, recently deceased. Add the divagations and cookery of her much younger but likewise well-heeled and worldly-wise novelist friend. Skim off all but the most fleeting references to a lifetime spent defending communist dictators. Stir in the egotism of two people convinced that the world is interested in their every word and swallow. Sweeten the bitter taste with pious complaints about second-generation immigrants who don't like the food of their parents and grandparents. Spice with random comments about life with Dashiell Hammett. Garnish with elitist comments about the culinary difficulties encountered when "servants who will cook or remain until midnight" cannot be found. Serves thousands when properly puffed up by a major publisher. Arm & Hammer and water, well mixed, complete the repast. cc

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Catholicism—especially in America. He has little patience for those theologians who "gleefully" proclaim that Christianity, "hitherto in opposition to the world," must now be "both with and in the world"; who have, in effect, "prostrated" themselves before "an anti-Christian mentality urged upon the masses by science"; who have then provided encouragement to "those hucksters in the temple, those purveyors of popular ideas, corruptors of young minds," who "pack the church" by packing their sermons with "wooly" phrases. Of course the Church, Milosz implies, must be unfailingly compassionate, and it must maintain a sense of humor. But to maintain a viable role in the world, it certainly ought not downplay a concept as fundamental—though albeit as grim—as that of Original Sin. It ought not then shirk the fact that it has a crucial, unending obligation to "restrain man from extreme Evil."

Milosz's tastes are impressively eclectic, but in *The Land of Ulro* he states once again that he favors literature that is "engaged with ultimate things," that "assents" to man's existence on earth; that avoids the sort of "mockery" and "profanation" that seems "cheap" when compared "to the power of Evil that is within everyman's experience." And though he never comes out and says so, it seems clear that Milosz senses that the need for a more affirmative, a less nihilistic and trifling literature has never been greater. He is certainly keenly aware that we have entered an age of prurience and imbecility—an age dominated by producers and publishers who work assiduously to make life "hideous, and arid, and vile," like those blustering "men of the crowd" that Arnold evokes in "Rugby Chapel." Astutely, Milosz suggests that in the main television, films, and "illustrated magazines" are "media that are for the mind what too small slippers were for women's feet in China."

The complex and even contradictory Milosz cannot be easily labeled. He is no more a "romantic" or a "neoclassicist" than he is a "conservative." But he does possess in ample measure what can only be described as conservative traits. He openly recognizes the existence of good and evil, and thus rejects the notion that all values are merely relative, that human behavior is solely the result of assorted biological and environmental determinants. Indeed he deplores the "tendency, stronger every day, to equate human beings with flies or cockroaches." He admits also to a taste for order and measure—for standards—in art; he laments the fact that these days creativity has come to mean little more than "excretion for the sake of excretion." He recognizes too that it is but a thin wall that separates civilization from absolute barbarism; he senses, rightly, that assorted barbarians are once more arrayed against that wall, and pressing hard.

Milosz is probably right when he observes in *The Land of Ulro* that relatively little of this century's art and literature is "salvageable"; he is right on the mark when he describes as largely "puerile" the works of those of his literary colleagues who remain "sensitive to the latest avant-garde fashions." Milosz's own remarkably sane and mature writings will never be popular, but as the Nobel committee recognized, they are surely worth reading, and will certainly endure. cc

Genes and Jingo *by Thomas J. Fleming*

"Even if you were to live for many years, yet you would not be able to discover the nature of a single straw or of a fly or of the slightest creature in the world."
—St. Bonaventure

Richard Dawkins: *The Extended Phenotype;* Oxford Press; New York.

R. C. Lewontin, Steven Rose, and Leon J. Kamin: *Not in Our Genes: Biology, Ideology, and Human Nature;* Pantheon; New York.

Popular journalists have begun writing off the sociobiology revolution. They begin their articles with titles like "Can Sociobiology Be Saved?" and quote the learned opinions of Stephen J. Gould and Ashley Montagu (would they lie?). They indulge in vaguely worded smears: Konrad Lorenz was a nazi, E. O. Wilson is a Southerner, and sociobiology is a code word for racism among members of the British National Front, the French *Nouvelle Droite*, and the American New Right. They hint darkly of a conspiracy between fascists and biologists to alter the genetic destiny of the human race. Even M. J. Konner, who should and does know better, disfigures an otherwise splendid book, *The Tangled Wing*, by comparing contemporary genetic determinists with the racial theorists of the Third Reich. Anyone who has ever earned his bread by the sweat of his face in a college classroom will recognize the typical signs of the higher McCarthyism.

The assault is succeeding partly because American universities remain dominated by good old-fashioned leftist bigotry. Even the science departments are not immune: both *Science* and *Scientific American* have recently come under fire for their adherence to the party line on pop issues like environmentalism. The banner of academic freedom, it seems, is broad enough to cover only one side of the street. But there are other reasons. Even American conservatives—especially the Christians among them—are suspicious. After all, it is a scientific revolution made up of neo-Darwinists, materialists, and atheists. Besides, intellectual conservatives tend to be historians or English professors, whose image of science was formed by Matthew Arnold. Even right-wing fans of sociobiology usually turn out to be talking about popularizers like Robert

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Ardrey or Desmond Morris. A few years back a prominent conservative organization held a discussion of "the new synthesis." Few people in the audience seemed to understand the social and political relevance of the debate.

Two recent books illustrate both what sociobiology is and why it makes so many academics see red: *The Extended Phenotype* by Oxford zoologist Richard Dawkins; and *Not in Our Genes* by geneticist R. C. Lewontin, neurobiologist Steven Rose, and psychologist Leon J. Kamin. Sociobiology, both sides would agree, is essentially a biological approach to studying the behavior and social life of organisms. In particular, it assumes that behavioral traits are, by and large, programmed genetically. The type of mud a wasp uses to build her nest, the size and shape of its construction, the number of eggs she lays (as well as how and when), the decision whether to build a new nest or attempt the takeover of an existing one—all these traits, it is assumed, have a genetic basis. The pioneers of sociobiology, W. D. Hamilton, Robert L. Trivers, Edward O. Wilson, were primarily concerned with reproductive success. After all, the "survival of the fittest" should mean that organisms with beneficial traits will survive and propagate more successfully than rivals who lack the trait. These traits—sharp teeth, strong muscles, and the infinite complexities of human social behavior—are all genetic *in origin*.

Richard Dawkins may be the most radical of the genetic determinists. The essence of his view is summed up in the word *selfish*. His first book, *The Selfish Gene* suggested that "the fundamental unit of selection, and therefore of self-interest, is not the species, nor the group, nor even strictly the individual. It is the gene, the unit of heredity." In other words, organisms, including the human organism, are simply vehicles adopted by genetic replicators as part of a strategy of survival and reproduction. Samuel Butler put the matter crudely a hundred years ago: a chicken, he declared, was simply an egg's way of making another egg. The selfishness of genes can and will be used to explain just about every facet of organic life, including parental care and the altruism we display toward relatives (what Wilson calls "soft-core altruism"). The self-sacrificing kindness we display to kindred is to some extent a function of our degree of relatedness, that is, the percentage of genes we are likely to have in common. If I carry gene A, I have a 50 percent probability that a given one of my children or siblings will carry the same gene. The figure goes down to 25 percent in the case of grandchildren. This sort of thinking obviously lay behind J. B. S. Haldane's *bon mot* about altruism. When asked in a pub if he would sacrifice his life to save his brother, Haldane replied not for *one* brother, but he would for three brothers or nine cousins.

Dawkins puts this notion of genetic selfishness at the heart of the struggle for survival. In his view, animal communication becomes a form of manipulation: the sender compels/persuades the receiver to alter his behavior. The male canary sings in order to induce a reproductive condition in the female—persuading her, in effect, to produce offspring that will carry his genes. But Dawkins does not restrict himself to the gross level of animal reproduction. In an almost terrifying display of reductionist brilliance, he speculates on the selfishness of DNA itself. His hypothesis—that "phenotypic characters of an organism [that is, the manifested attributes] are there because they help DNA to replicate itself"—leads him to wonder about the reason for "junk" DNA, the surplus which may never be translated into RNA. Why, for example, does a salamander need 20 times the number of different genes that are found in man? From Dawkins's perspective the question almost answers itself: there is a "molecular struggle for existence" (Orgel & Crick)

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which is a microcosm of the large-scale struggle between organisms. Not even the sanctity of our cells is respected. Cytoplasm may be in competition with nuclei in determining the sex ratios of gametes (sex cells), and mitochondria (organelles involved in energy release) may be in origin invading cells, bits of protein which have established a symbiotic relationship with the rest of the cell—a parasite at the heart of our existence.

It is a disturbing picture, but Dawkins means to shock us. Even if he is wrong on every single point, his book is the highest sort of intellectual game-playing. Time after time we are treated to elaborate "what ifs" which expand our ability to think about the nature of things by forcing us to imagine an alternate set of arrangements. He describes his method by referring to the Necker Cube, a two-dimensional representation which we can interpret, depending on our perspective, as two different cubes. Both views are equally correct. "Similarly the vision of life that I advocate . . . is not provably more correct than the orthodox view. It is a different view and I suspect that, at least in some respects, it provides a deeper understanding."

Dawkins's central theorem of the extended phenotype—his ostensible subject—comes late in the book: "An animal's behavior tends to maximize the survival of the genes 'for' that behavior, whether or not those genes happen to be in the body of the particular animal performing it." The most obvious examples come from the strange world of parasites: the brain-worm which induces an ant to be eaten by sheep so that the worm can complete its life cycle; the tapeworm larva that secretes a substance to stimulate abnormal mouse growth; the worm which causes an infected bee to turn kamikaze and dive straight into water. These are all examples of how the genes of one organism maximize their reproductive success by controlling the behavior of another. The extended phenotype also includes the deliberate manipulation of the environment—beaver dams and termite mounds.

This notion of an extended phenotype answers at least one of the criticisms expressed by the opponents of sociobiology: that it focuses only on the effects of genes upon behavior and adaption to environment—it says nothing about the impact of organic life upon environment. Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin oppose the view that organisms "develop as a series of modifications imposed upon an essentially passive, recipient object by the buffeting of 'the environment.'" In their view, "organisms do not merely receive a given environment but actively seek alternatives or change what they find." They reject Dawkins's idea of the extended phenotype because, well, because it is Dawkins's idea. They deliberately misrepresent his position by quoting as part of his theory certain ideas which Dawkins introduces as the "entertaining speculations" of his colleagues.

In fact, many of the criticisms made by Lewontin *et al.* are addressed and answered by Dawkins. The most basic objection is to genetic determinism *per se*. Stephen J. Gould and now Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin seem to find it morally and intellectually reprehensible to think that there are severe genetic constraints on human social behavior. After all, if men were naturally violent and territorial, if human beings inevitably sorted themselves out in pecking orders, if male dominance really is a natural phenomenon and not just the result of social and cultural oppression, then what happens to all those political movements to which they have devoted themselves? We might even begin to think that there is a connection between the Marxist suppression of private property and free enterprise and the tens of millions of Soviet citizens who died as a sacrifice to Lenin's and Stalin's gentle illusions about the brotherhood of man.

Dawkins wonders if his critics reject genetic determinism because they are not materialists. Obviously, as dialectical materialists, few of them are prepared to believe that man has free will because a supernatural creator made him that way. In fact, most of their objections are at the policy level. They are afraid that if we stigmatize criminal behavior or low intelligence as genetic disorders, then they will be regarded as inevitable or as an inherited curse to be eliminated from the gene pool. Dawkins describes such fears of fatalism as "pernicious rubbish on an almost astrological scale." Genetic causes, like environmental causes, may be either difficult or easy to reverse. The ill effects of certain hereditary diseases are now treatable. The same cannot be said for the consequence of a government school education in the U.S. The issue of free will is completely irrelevant to the debate. As Dawkins realizes, the only serious alternative to some form of genetic determinism is religion.

"Not in Our Genes *is an important and timely book, for it not only exposes the fallacies of biological determinism . . . but also presents a positive view of human behavior that could propel us past the stupefying sterility of nature-nurture arguments.*"

Stephen Jay Gould
The New York Review of Books

Lewontin *et al.* are not religious in the ordinary sense, but their collective Marxism is a familiar surrogate. They speak of faith in science as the "bourgeois ideology"; they argue for a "dialectical" understanding of behavior. They repeat crude Marxian interpretations of history: Roman and feudal society, for example, was "repeatedly upset by servile revolts"; scientific abstraction is the analogue of mercantile exchange. Above all, they make liberal use of the mirror fallacy—the idea that the U.S.S.R. and the U.S. are mirror images of each other. Does the Soviet Union use psychotropic drugs and shock therapy to "correct" the behavior of dissidents? No matter, because in the U.S. rapists are occasionally given drugs to inhibit their sexual (and violent) impulses. It is an old gambit. Sure, the Russians took over Eastern Europe, sent the tanks into Hungary, set up a Gulag which liquidated undesirable minorities, but what about the CIA involvement in Chile? The authors' anti-American bias is so strong that it blinds them even to the astonishing material progress experienced by every class of society in the U.S.:

> In 1900 only 6.3 percent of the 17-year-old population of the United States were high school graduates, while at present it is about 75 percent, yet the unequal

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distribution of wealth and social power remains.

The fact that Americans live on an unprecedented scale of affluence would not, I think, impress them. No aspect of their argument is untainted by ideology. Even the typography makes a statement: time after time a *sic* is put after a quotation as if to say, "Look, these people are self-evidently absurd."

"An overtly expressed political commitment does not debar a scientist from viewing nature accurately."

Stephen Jay Gould
The New York Review of Books

It is not that Lewontin and company do not have valid points to make on the perils of IQ testing and the abuses of mind-controlling drugs, but most of their book is taken up with laying red herrings across the trail of rational discourse: the usual slurs against Konrad Lorenz's youthful enthusiasm for eugenics, the intellectual limitations of Robert Ardrey, the popularity of *The Selfish Gene* with the National Front. At least they are upfront about their politics. They most definitely do not like the idea of a limited human nature. They believe these truths to be self-evident, that "the inequalities of wealth, power, and status are not 'natural' but socially imposed."

Since Lewontin, Rose, and Kamin find the methods and theory of sociobiology "fundamentally flawed," it is worthwhile to consider how responsible they have been in constructing *Not in Our Genes*. As a major proof test for their case, the authors take up the subject of gender differences and what they loosely describe as "patriarchy." Since much of the hostility to sociobiology has come from the feminists and fellow-traveling males, L.R.&K. might be expected to have done their homework. Our expectations are disappointed.

Scientific arguments to support inherent gender differences represent, they suggest, "a systematic selection, misrepresentation, or improper extrapolation of the evidence, larded with prejudice and basted in poor theory." And yet, when we come to read the chapter, we discover systematic selection, misrepresentation, and improper extrapolation on a colossal scale. No references to the pioneering researches on newborn children by Anneliese Korner, the sociology of Alice S. Rossi, the psychological studies of Donald Broverman, the animal studies of, for example, Joslyn, or the entire issue of *Science* devoted to sexual dimorphism. They cite E. O. Wilson and Pierre Van Den Berghe for displaying a chauvinistic, Western-dominated view of culture, but do not take the trouble to look up the myriad cross-cultural studies on sex roles and family patterns. Such research might be fatal to their prejudices. Male dominance is simply another form of oppression. Patriarchy, they declare, could not be predicted from the biological differences between men and women—that would be reductionist! Instead, they prefer the more modest view of dialectical materialism. They remind us that the disciplines used to investigate gender differences are "predominantly male science" as if women did not dominate the field of gender studies in every discipline.

When they take up the issue of sociobiology directly, they perform no better. "If aggression and patriotism are universal human traits, then was A. J. Mustie, who spent many years in jail for obstructing patriotic wars, other than human?" Suppose we told them that man is a two-legged animal with a capacity for language. "But," they would object, "what about my uncle Jake who lost his leg in the war? What about mutes?" It is hard to believe they want to be taken seriously. They save their highest flights of fancy for their discussion of property. Real property, they claim, is a modern invention, because in the Middle Ages property was not a relation between man and thing but between man and man. Put aside what the authors don't know about ancient land tenure or the varieties of landholding in primitive societies. Forget about the incredible diversity of feudal Europe. Do they imagine that the world was collectivist until the 17th century? or that because families (and not individuals) frequently exercise ownership rights, this means there is no owner? They even go so far as to confuse (apparently) real property with other forms of private property which are demonstrably universal. Even Marx knew better.

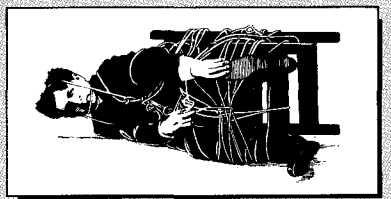
It is, in fact, embarrassing to see to what level this trio is willing to sink. That Steven Rose, a doctrinaire propagandist who has made a career out of vilification, should be guilty of such a travesty is no surprise, but for a distinguished geneticist like R. C. Lewontin to lend his name to such a discreditable enterprise is the saddest event in the history of genetics since the days when J. B. S. Haldane allowed the considerable magic of his reputation to be used by Stalin's favorite scientist, T. D. Lysenko. The issues raised by sociobiology are important; the implications may even be dangerous. But the clerical obscurantism of American academics poses an even greater danger. It is hard to escape the feeling that if the heliocentric theory were inconsistent with Marxism, we would soon see the statues of Copernicus torn down and replaced by Ptolemy. cc

LIBERAL ARTS

School of Hard Knocks

In an address delivered a decade ago but recently published for the first time in *The Friday Book*, John Barth, avant-garde novelist and director of Johns Hopkins' creative writing program, comments on the marvelous "*in*formal education in political reality" achieved through the "tumultuous events on our campuses" during the late 60's and early 70's:

> I think I pity the campuses—and the students, professors, and administrators—who were spared all that: the takeovers and disruptions and strikes, the trashings, the tear gas, the obscenities and vulgarities and head-crackings and groin-kickings of '67, '68, '69, and '70.



Perhaps Mr. Barth's students can arrange something for '85, '86, '87, and '88. cc

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EUROPEAN ANTI-AMERICANISM: NOTHING NEW ON THE WESTERN FRONT *by Paul Hollander*

I visited Western Europe recently to learn more about the critical attitudes of intellectuals and other opinion-makers (primarily academics and journalists) toward the United States. I was especially interested in how such European critiques resembled those produced by American intellectuals. I also wanted to learn something about the connections between animosity toward the U.S. and the social-critical impulses of Western European intellectuals toward their own society. I suspected (partly on the basis of some earlier work) that there was a confluence of social criticism focused on particular Western European societies, a broader rejection of the West and the designation of the United States as a major source of evil and corruption in our times.

I do not equate specific criticisms of American society or foreign policy with hostility toward the U.S. By contrast I regard anti-Americanism as a broad predisposition to blame the U.S. for a wide variety of evils in the world today, a diffuse hostility which does not reduce to specific criticisms of the U.S., and is more than the sum of its parts. Such a hostility is not simply a response to the misdeeds or errors of American political leaders or to the greed of American businessmen or the vulgarity of American mass culture. The phenomenon I have for some time been interested in is the readiness to designate the United States as a global symbol of evil, destructiveness, injustice, and irrationality —a scapegoat for a wide range of problems in different parts of the world. To be sure, such a predisposition can be activated or intensified by particular policies of American politicians or the behavior of particular individual Americans (including ordinary tourists) or by exposure to particular products of American culture.

Although intense hostility toward the U.S. has been a cornerstone of the Soviet view of the world and a major component of its policies, I do not believe that Soviet efforts have been responsible for the hostility here discussed, though, of course, Soviet policy seeks to enlarge such sentiments.

While much is written these days about the intensification of anti-Americanism in West Germany and the sharp decline of corresponding sentiments in France, less attention has been paid to other Western European countries which may exemplify more enduring attitudes toward the U.S., or perhaps more enduring varieties of animosity. I decided to take soundings of such attitudes in England, Holland, and Sweden. In the course of my travels I had conversations or more formal interviews with TV and newspaper journalists, prominent columnists, newspaper and magazine editors, educators and academics (primarily in the social sciences and humanities), and lawyers active in labor and liberal politics. My informants included peace movement activists (leaders as well as rank and file), a member of the House of Lords (in England), English and Dutch specialists in both Soviet and American studies, both detractors and friends of the U.S.

One of the first things I found out was that at the present time animosity toward the U.S. tends to take the form of equating the U.S. and the Soviet Union as "The Superpowers." This seemingly detached and objective formula accommodates attitudes far more critical toward the U.S. than the U.S.S.R. as it allows for equating the actions and policies of the two countries which bear only the most superficial similarity. Thus, for example, many English, Dutch, or Swedish intellectuals find the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan and American intervention in El Salvador equally deplorable—a comparison that overlooks the difference between an intervention with 55 military advisors (who are not even allowed to go into the battle zone) critically scrutinized by the mass media and the intervention of 120,000 Soviet troops using every nonnuclear weapon available in an indiscriminate onslaught on a country which no foreign journalist is allowed to cover, an intervention not subject to public opinion nor to any legal, constitutional, or moral restraint. Not only are these two forms of intervention equated; in fact the American one generates far greater critical publicity and moral outrage.

The Superpower equation conceals a profound incapacity or unwillingness to make distinctions. Protestors at Greenham Common in England compared the local authorities of the nearby Newbury to the KGB for seeking to restrain their protest activities. According to a Dutch sociologist, the program on Poland produced by the U.S. Information Agency elicited more fervent criticism than the military coup which the program sought to protest. A young English sociologist described these attitudes more generally as a feeling that "there is little to choose between the two Superpowers" (a feeling he himself shared). He thoughtfully observed that there were no concentration camps in the U.S. but hastily added that when it came to foreign policy there was little to choose between.

Notwithstanding such "evenhandedness," disapproval of Soviet misconduct (e.g., in Afghanistan) tends to be perfunctory and lacking in emotional force or moral indignation. A leader of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in England may admit that the Soviet-inspired repression in Poland is regrettable but will not dwell on such a topic and move rapidly to a truly heartfelt denunciation of American policies in Central America or Grenada. Even when such

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equations are made there is a quality of understanding reserved for the Soviet side and a respectful appreciation of the Soviet concern with security.

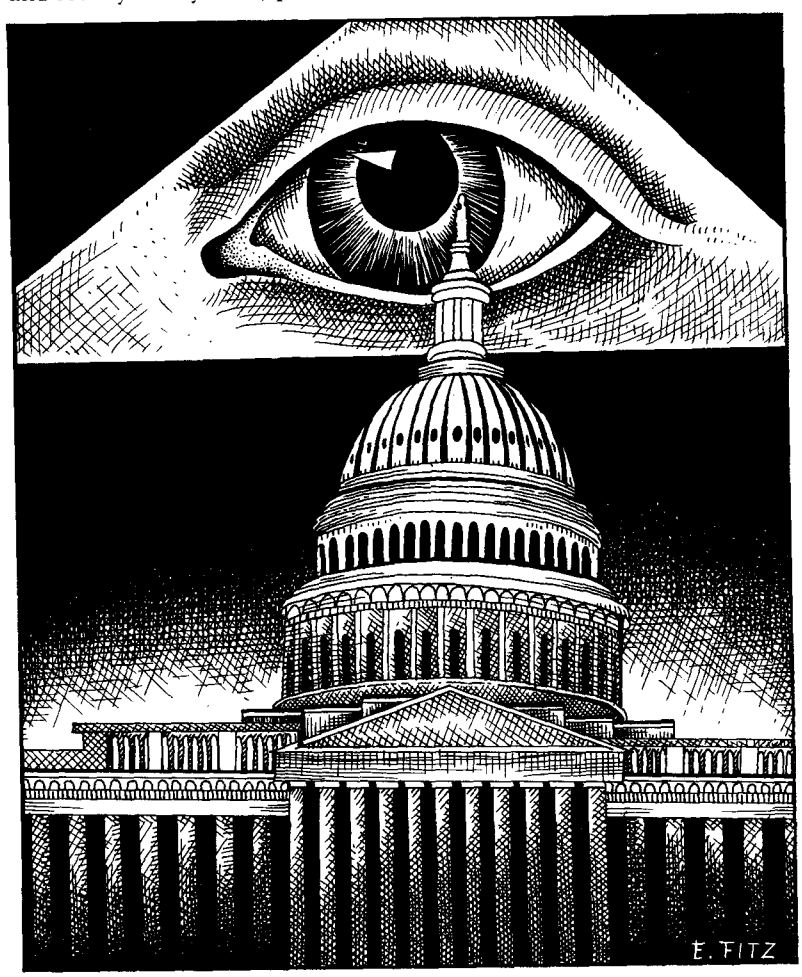
On closer inspection the equation of the Superpowers reveals peculiar double standards. Peace activists and left-wing intellectuals who are extremely judgmental about American policy claim that they expect more of the U.S. But, one may ask, if they expect more why are they so hostile to begin with? Why should one be *predisposed* to criticism and disapproval toward a country or political system more highly regarded? There are two possible answers. One is that these critics don't really expect more of the U.S. but it is a convenient rationalization of their double standards. Secondly, it is possible that what they mean by "expecting more" translates into ambivalence.

That the equation of the Superpowers conceals a profound asymmetry of standards and sentiments is also shown in the nature of political protest emanating from the Peace Movements of Western Europe. When pressed on the one-sidedness of their protest, which rarely is addressed to the Soviet Union (although it long ago deployed the intermediate missiles NATO is seeking to deploy in the years ahead), peace activists usually admit that it is no use directing any protest at the U.S.S.R. Yet the U.S. gets no credit for being a political power which even its critics perceive as more responsive, more reasonable, and tolerant of protest. When I inquired about the apparent unconcern with the SS-20, I was repeatedly told that little was known about them and little information was provided by the media. Dutch critics of the peace movement brought to my attention a recent opinion poll which revealed that 25 percent of those polled expressed doubts about the existence of the Soviet intermediate missiles.

It does not take a lengthy investigation to reach the conclusion that animosity toward the U.S. and professed concerns with nuclear war are hard to separate in Western Europe. A similar relationship between critiques of American society and antinuclear protest can also be observed in the United States. As a matter of fact, critics of the U.S. tend to oppose all forms of military spending on the part of the U.S. and NATO. The Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament in England, in particular, is more than a movement organized for the purpose of averting nuclear war. The CND is a classic protest movement—not unlike the Vietnam antiwar movement of earlier times—which brings together a variety of causes and grievances and a wide range of groups and individuals held together by a diffuse sense of discontent with their society. According to a Dutch academic, what members of the peace movements, and especially the activists, have in common is "a sense of the sinfulness of the West." Such a generalized social criticism —which sees Western nuclear arms and military policies as the culmination of the evil or folly of Western societies led by the U.S.—echoes the critiques of the 1960's and early 70's. Consumerism, materialism, impersonality, excessive individualism (or, the stunting of genuine individualism) —the old themes are all there, at any rate, in a residual form. Under the broad umbrella of the antinuclear or peace movement one finds assembled, first, the radical-left-wing critics of capitalism and *bourgeois* democracy (providing the leadership and activist core), radical feminists, homosexuals, crusaders for the physical environment, contingents of teachers and social workers and, in ever-increasing numbers, clerics. They are especially important as they bestow upon these movements spiritual purpose and respectability.

Another asymmetry in the Superpower equation is that many who subscribe to it claim to feel far more threatened by the U.S. than the U.S.S.R. They claim that the Soviet Union is self-evidently less bellicose and more of a status quo power, because of the losses it suffered in World War II. The personality of President Reagan is also frequently invoked to explain the sense of threat the U.S. today represents. A mild-mannered, generally reasonable and thoughtful English sociologist said to me that "the U.S. under Reagan is the most dangerous country in the world," that "every escalation in the arms race came from the U.S." and unlike the U.S. "the Soviet Union is encircled." Soviet bases in Cuba are totally different from American bases in Turkey.

The perceived attributes of Reagan are significant factors in the recent upsurge of hostility toward the U.S. In the eyes of actual or potential critics of the U.S., Reagan has come to stand for most of the things generations of critics disliked about America, including his background as an actor. Such objections go well with a more traditional elitist cultural anti-Americanism which sees incompetence and inexperience in high places. Reagan is also seen as the symbol of everything inauthentic about American culture and society: Hollywood, public relations, the manipulation



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of the media, crass commercialism, the love of luxurious consumption, support of the rich and indifference to the poor, an old-fashioned, hollow patriotism, the defense of capitalism and American power.

Reagan is also regarded as trigger-happy, aggressive, and provocative toward the Soviet Union. His "evil empire" characterization of the Soviet Union was repeatedly mentioned with great consternation. (Even in Hungary, where hostility of any type toward the U.S. is rare, the cowboy image appeared to be imprinted in the minds of people suggesting the possibility that we may here also confront an example of a highly successful Soviet propaganda campaign that shrewdly capitalized on images and predispositions in search of a personified scapegoat. I should add that my visit to Hungary was unrelated to my interest in anti-Americanism.) On the whole, Reagan's power and influence is vastly overrated both among the critics and friends of the United States. Highly educated people appeared to entertain a view of the American political system more appropriate to the personal dictatorship of Quadaffi of Libya or Kim Il Sung of North Korea than to a system in which "the chief executive" is subject to a vast network of controls, restraints, and countervailing forces.

While much of the animosity toward the U.S. is ostensibly focused on its foreign policy, there are deeper layers of sentiment and historical memories which undergird the current criticisms. In particular, Vietnam and Watergate loom large, the first symbolizing recklessness and brutality in foreign policy, the second corruption and the abuse of power at home.

My conversations also confirmed that specific critiques of the United States almost invariably rest on a bedrock of anticapitalist sentiments. Critics of capitalism in Western Europe (and elsewhere) are bound to be hostile to the U.S., the guardian of the "world system" of capitalism, the most powerful capitalist country. Anticapitalism is also congenial with the peace activists who readily fix the blame for every political conflict upon profit hunger and the lucrativeness of the arms business ("weapons manufacturers seeking to expand their multi-billion dollar market," as a booklet of the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament puts it). By contrast, the Soviet contribution to the arms race is unknown or unappreciated or legitimized by the honorable motives of self-defense. That motives other than profit could play a part in the militarization of a society and its rise to a military superpower status eludes such critics of the U.S.

It appears that CND has abandoned even a pretense of evenhandedness as far as American and Soviet contributions to the arms race and a possible military conflict are concerned. Its publications overflow with undisguised hostility toward the U.S. The women of Greenham Common "recognized with horror that Britain was becoming a nuclear dump for a foreign power." The base itself "is a small American town in which the U.S. dollar is the currency and the British criminal law counts for little" (*Greenham Women Against Cruise Missiles*—apparently an American publication of the Center for Constitutional Rights in New York City).

In another pamphlet discussing life at the U.S. bases in England one can read:

> Luxury is cheap and abundant. . . . In the officer's mess at Mildenhall a champagne brunch is laid on. . . . A young pilot clad in a very zippy flying suit festooned with bright badges, flashes, emblems, decals, numbers and bars, sits at a table covered with fine linen eating a giant cream puff with a silver fork. He has champagne there and three other types of cream cake and, as he quaffs away at both, he is deeply absorbed in the pages of a child's comic (*Sanity*, May 1984).

It is all there: the childlike American technological savage with the pea-brain and vast power luxuriating on British soil. Only the theme of drug addiction is missing (I was also told by CND sympathizers that one reason Americans should not be trusted with nuclear weapons is because drug-taking is rampant among the troops). The U.S. air base, according to CND literature, is not only the setting of such bizarre contrasts (as the infantile American guzzling champagne over comic books), but "a major U.S. air base is a strange, different, alien and menacing world." Presumably, military air bases of other nations are warm, friendly, and familiar spots.

American reconnaissance planes "aim to provoke" the Warsaw Pact countries. On the whole, "The use of U.S. troops around the world has a number of consequences, chiefly the stifling of the rights of people to determine their own destinies. . . . This tendency to intervention has an added sinister dimension. By multiplying confrontations of conventional forces, it multiplies the opportunities for conventional confrontations to turn into nuclear ones." The booklet also asserts that "currently more than half the U.S. Federal tax dollars are spent on the military." It is in fact less than a third.

While the part played by the churches in the peace movements and their highly critical attitudes toward the U.S. have been analyzed before, some new light was shed on the matter in my conversations. Virtually everybody I talked to observed that the peace issue and the activism it generates has been a great boon to the churches anxious to retain or regain their flock. A Dutch historian suggested that for the churches the nuclear issue is especially congenial as it represents "the exploitation of fear." After all, he added, "the churches don't like truly liberated people; they need people with fear." Perhaps even more to the point is that the peace movement offers an easy path to virtue and a set of new certainties. Such strongly moralistic movements also need an image of evil which can conveniently be projected upon the U.S. In addition, it appears that it is much easier for Western European peace activists, including intellectuals, to imagine—with the assistance of the media—the horrors of nuclear war (accidental or other) than the disagreeable aspects of life under a Soviet-type political system. And even if that could be imagined, it is hard to see the connection between unilateral nuclear disarmament, shifts in global power relations, and the approach of Soviet domination. But I also heard—especially in Holland—that "Finlandization" is not such a terrible fate, after all.

It did not take long to recognize that the critiques of

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American society and policies voiced in Western Europe were almost identical with the major strands of social criticism directed at American institutions and policies at home. While such a convergence is presumably largely a matter of osmosis, I was also given examples of situations in which American social critics instructed their European counterparts or provided them with cues to follow. A Swedish professor of economics insisted that "all Swedish Marxists learned their Marxism in America." A Dutch historian told me that not long ago Stanley Hoffman of Harvard lectured a Dutch academic audience on the perils and flaws of American foreign policy. An English journalist noted that, when in London recently, Gloria Steinem dwelt on "the lack of freedoms in America" and referred to President Reagan as a "smiling fascist." *The Missing* was a huge success in Western Europe. Western European critics of the U.S. readily refer to American sources and supporting material. Indirectly, the products of American mass culture also support denigration of the U.S. more at the cultural than political level. "They look at *Dallas* and their heart swells," said an English intellectual, commenting on the kind of confirmation such programs provide of the stereotyped, negative views of life in the United States. A leader of the CND told me that on his visit to the U.S. he was surprised at the vehemence of criticism directed at American policies from the pulpits of the churches in this country. According to an English educator, many critics of the U.S. in England rely heavily on the Bowles-Gintis critique of American education and society.

In trying to understand why the temptation to criticize and disparage the U.S. in Western Europe seems so irresistible, one is led to ponder the impact of the available visual images of this country. There are documentaries and pictorial reports (on television) which offer vivid, visual images confirming and substantiating in concrete detail the various critiques and negative predispositions. Western Europeans (like Americans) can readily call upon mental pictures of American slums, the homeless, victims of assassinations or crime, lines waiting for unemployment assistance, photos of American machines of war, and many other unappealing images of American society and power. By contrast, the muted and perfunctory criticisms of the Soviet Union can at least in part be explained by the almost total absence of any visual image of the ills and injustices of Soviet society which could provide vivid and powerful emotional substantiation and support for the typically lukewarm disapproval of Soviet domestic policies and exercise of power. The victims of war in Central America are prominently displayed on the evening news in the U.S. as in Western Europe; Afghan villages daily obliterated by Soviet air power or artillery are not to be seen. Soviet poverty, in the absence of visual documentation, remains an abstraction. Thus, in the final analysis, the Soviet Union reaps considerable benefits from its elaborate policies of censorship (and the self-censorship it imposes on resident Western correspondents). It allows her to present a seamless monolithic and somewhat mysterious facade which interacts with the high levels of Western public ignorance and lack of interest. It is difficult to muster moral indignation against something about which one knows very little and of which one has no conceptions, visual or other.

Several conclusions might be drawn from these impressions and experiences. The first one is that hostility toward the U.S. is, in large measure, independent of what this country does; it is not necessarily a response to identifiable policies or actions, although the latter may and often do deepen or aggravate the negative predispositions noted. If so, there is a limit to what the U.S. can do to make itself popular or well liked in many parts of the world.

Second, critics of the U.S. in Western Europe also tend to be critics of their own society and its real or imaginary defects. Whatever they find wrong with their own society has its counterpart in the U.S. multiplied severalfold. In the words of a Dutch student of American society, "the disaffection with America [is] part of a much wider disaffection with the complexities and contradictions of modern society."

Underneath such animosities lurks at least the memory of high expectations. Anti-Americanism in its virulent, irrational form may only cease when unreasonable expectations are laid to rest. My landlady in Budapest asked me, "Have the Americans found a solution to the food smell in refrigerators?" Such concerns illustrate the evolution of expectations in Hungary. While the U.S., as Hungarians see it, is neither any longer the powerful champion of human freedoms around the world nor paradise on earth, it may still hold the key to the solutions of problems vital to the new generation of consumers in Hungary. Needless to say, there is no animosity toward the U.S. in Hungary. Nor do Eastern European intellectuals harbor high expectations about the perfectability of social systems and human beings. By contrast, many Western European (and American) intellectuals blame the United States for the discomforts of living in a world which has not only become an increasingly dangerous place, but also one which cannot gratify their longing for a sense of purpose and meaning. ∞

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COMMENDABLES

Schools For Scandal

by Alan J. Levine

Herbert I. London: ***Why Are They Lying to Our Children?;*** Stein and Day; New York.

The title of Herbert London's book is an all-too-accurate description of the textbooks used to "educate" American students. *Why Are They Lying to Our Children?* is a brief and closely reasoned exploration of the "faddist and trendy character of these books, which adopt the mood of the times without any concessions to historical perspective." He finds a consistent pattern of ideological bias in textbooks dealing with economic development, the environment, and the probable nature of the future —complicated, in some cases, by a sheer lack of any sense of proportion on the part of some writers. (One textbook writer wrote of the "tragedy" of traffic jams.) The picture of the future conveyed by textbooks and teachers' guides is horrible indeed—an imminent and *almost inevitable* sequence of material shortages, environmental collapse, famine, and war. It is also a picture of the present, heavily loaded with guilt over American and Western affluence and responsibility for the misfortunes of others. It is the advanced countries of the "North," and especially the United States, that are primarily responsible for the sufferings of the world's poor. It is because we are so wealthy that the poor countries of the world are so impoverished. The energy crisis is only the first installment of our long overdue punishment for exploitation and wealth. The West or the North (these people have a somewhat confused sense of direction) —has an obligation to help the "Third World" or "South" repair the damage that has been done. Moreover, the advanced countries produce most of the pollution. Science and technology are bad, especially if they are complex and function on a large scale. Only "small is beautiful." Nuclear energy, especially, is evil. In fact, man at worst is evil and at best a nuisance. These writers are firm believers in the somewhat old-fashioned opposition between "Man" and "Nature," but unlike traditional believers in this division, they side with "Nature" against humanity.

The textbook view of the world is static and curiously anachronistic. It is a world view based neither on long-term historical trends nor on current observation, but on the fads of the late 1960's. Much of this world view is the new Malthusianism: the known finitude of natural resources, a high and increasing population growth rate, and an ever-increasing amount of air and water pollution.

London is no anti-environmentalist fanatic; he counsels a prudent, measured approach to environmental problems. In fact, he stresses, it is not a case of there being no problem—rather it is a problem that can be solved, indeed, has been solved to some degree. Air and water pollution have generally greatly decreased since the 1960's. This may not be very comforting to someone living on top of a toxic waste dump—but it is a fact that people in general are less exposed to hazards than they used to be. Population growth has begun to level off. Food production, contrary to fears widespread in the late 1960's, has not peaked, although London admits that the African continent is a major exception in the otherwise encouraging food picture. Despite predictions of shortages of raw materials, mineral prices have actually fallen. The gap between rich and poor nations has not continuously widened; it has shrunk, since a "middle" group of nations has emerged from the formerly underdeveloped group. Life expectancy rates and nutritional standards have risen worldwide.

It is not merely specific predictions and projections that are proving fatuous, but the basic elements of the textbook world view. It is the advanced countries that are primarily responsible for economic progress; it is the backward nations that are dependent on them, not the other way around. If the United States uses a "disproportionate" part of the world's resources, it is because it is engaged in the major part of the world's production. We have a "disproportionate" share of wealth because we generate it. London argues that there are no purely environmental or economic reasons why we cannot build a world where all people can enjoy a reasonable degree of prosperity. Given reasonable prudence, we need not trample each other, starve, choke on wastes, or stagnate in a no-growth, static world. In fact, much of the world seems to be moving, if unsteadily, in the direction of high prosperity. If the world's scientists, engineers, businessmen, and hardworking masses were able to carry on undisturbed by other factors, we might be heading for a very happy future indeed.

Unfortunately, things are not that simple. Politics, after all, and less-well-defined stresses, are also present, and give ample cause for pessimism. We need not restrict ourselves to the well-known threats posed by nuclear war and communist totalitarian expansion. The poor countries themselves, even those that are modernizing, are powerful generators of problems. As Samuel Huntington and others have shown, the very process of modernization itself is a cause of violence and turmoil, particularly when it is complicated by irrational nationalist feelings. Contemporary Iran is a case in point. The modernization of Europe, though a more gradual and arguably more organic and methodical process than that of poor countries today, ended in two World Wars and the rise of communism and nazism. Whether the process of modernization, once begun, will always be completed is another problem. Iran may have wrecked its chance to enter the modern world, even when it rediscovers the will to do so. The "middle-group" of nations London cites may not be very stable or secure—Iran, for a while, was one of that group. The success of some of the advancing countries may well be atypical of the "Third World." Even where intelligent policies have produced growth, there is no guarantee that it will continue. Nonethe-

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less, London's book is a much-needed corrective to the doomsaying which has become so fashionable in recent years.

Alan J. Levine is a frequent contributor to Chronicles of Culture.

Mother of Her Country

Pauline Glen Winslow: *I, Martha Adams;* St. Martins; New York.

Something strange is brewing in the popular arts these days. *Red Dawn* reminded its very large audiences of the possible menace of a Soviet invasion, and every week producer Stephen J. Cannell entertains millions of American viewers with the exploits of heroic Vietnam veterans on the A *Team* (the most reactionary show ever on television) and *Riptide*. Even novelists are turning to pro-American themes. Last year, Martyn Burke's very funny *Commissar's Report* provided, between the laughs, a frightening glimpse into Soviet life. Now comes *I, Martha Adams*, a thriller by the author of *The Brandenburg Hotel* and *The Counsellor Heart*.

The Russians have occupied the U.S. Predictably, most government officials accommodate themselves to the new order. All the usual arguments about sensitivity and compassion are trotted out to support nonresistance, and the radical chic crowd actually applauds the invasion as a step toward world peace. Only Martha Adams, the wife of a dead scientist, knows the secret of an American Doomsday Machine which could bring the Soviets to their knees. This fast-paced and very readable adventure novel chronicles Martha Adam's almost single-handed efforts to save her country. It is, as they say, a good read and the perfect gift for patriots addicted to thrillers. cc

Troubled Sleep

Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley: *Frankenstein: Or, the Modern Prometheus;* University of California; Berkeley.

In the more than 165 years since Mary Shelley wrote her Gothic tale, Victor Frankenstein and his monster have become an enduring symbol of the modern mind. She was only a girl of 18 when her adolescent nightmares curdled into the murky tale of an earnest young man trying vainly to escape the consequences of his experiment in creating life. *Frankenstein*'s merits do not lie in style or construction: it is as clumsy and, in its own way, as overwritten as any neo-Gothic novel cobbled together by Joyce Carol Oates. Characters are inserted as an afterthought with only the flimsiest of apologies, and the personages are contrived to move from event to event like so many chessmen manipulated by an amateur.

And yet, there is an after-image of the Modern Prometheus that has continued to haunt the conscience of succeeding generations as much as it troubled Mary's sleep. This daughter of the first feminist (Mary Wollstonecraft) and an ardent social revolutionary (William Godwin), a girl who defied convention and ran off with the very model of poetic rebellion—she of all people touched the panel on the wall, by accident, and found the secret passageway to the 20th century: our fear of death, our relentless faith in the white-coated scientists who will save us from extinction, our even greater—and older—fear of what this power means. In the words of the serpent:

> Your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

That was the first temptation to which the human race succumbed. But it is not so much the creator of life, Victor Frankenstein, that we remember but his creation: the larger-than-life monster who craves the love and understanding he can never receive at human hands, who demands a soul mate that his

creator will not complete, who —finally—in his resentment and despair sets out to poison his maker's life by murdering everyone dear to him—his brother, his friend, his wife. When we hold up this tale as a mirror, we see as our reflection not the face of Victor Frankenstein but of his monster; of modern man, the creature of the Modern Prometheus.

The University of California Press should be congratulated on bringing out this splendid Pennyroyal edition at a relatively affordable price ($29.50). The oversized format combined with Barry Moser's evocative illustrations make it the only edition of this 1818 classic worth acquiring. cc

Last Rites

Mary Douglas: *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of the Concepts of Pollution and Taboo;* Ark/Routledge & Kegan Paul; London.

The history of most religions can be written as a struggle between High and Low Church. There is always a tension between those who adhere to ritual and tradition and those who seek salvation only from things of the spirit. As an ecumenical institution, Christianity practically begins with Paul's insistence on the faith that saves as opposed to the law that condemns. In religious studies as well, ritualists are lined up against those who would strip off layer after layer of magic, superstition, and taboo before reaching the pure center of faith and ethics. In *Purity and Danger*, Mary Douglas followed in the footsteps of Robertson Smith, Émile Durkheim, and her distinguished mentor, Evans-Pritchard, all of whom took seriously the *forms*, as well as the spiritual content, of religious life. Her subject is the notion of "pollution" or what we now call *dirt*. To take a familiar case, why does Leviticus prohibit the eating of pigs and fish without fins? Surely, not for reasons of health: trichinosis was not discovered until the 19th century. Such taboos have more to do with order than physical well-being. Anomalous or ambiguous phenomena and events upset the order of things—an order which is imposed by our systems of classifying everything: male/female, light/dark, water/land, air/earth, kin/foreign, right/left . . . and so on. Inevitably, there are cracks in any system: four-legged creatures with wings, swine that divide the hoof but do not chew the cud, squirrels that fly through the air but also walk on the ground, men that sleep with their mothers. "Any given culture must confront events which seem to defy its assumptions. . . . That is why . . . we find in any culture worthy of the name various provisions for dealing with ambiguous or anomalous events." In our own secular culture, dirt—what William James called matter out of place—takes the place of pollution. Our obsession with cleanliness may have more to do with our sense of order than from anything we know about microbes.

In the Old Testament pollution was a subject of some importance. It was seen primarily as a violation of Holiness, which "requires that different classes of things shall not be confused." Holiness is, therefore, right order and wholeness

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or perfection. It is pollution if a priest has only one eye or if a man confounds the order of things by mating with his sister. Morality is more a question of rights. It protects a husband against adultery, but Holiness separates what should be kept separate. Incest, adultery, and homosexuality are abominations not so much because they infringe upon anyone's rights but because they are confusions. It is easy to read a Freudian message into all the taboos on sexual behavior and bodily emissions. Obviously, we are all more or less interested in our own bodies and tend to see the universe as a projection of our physical shapes. We devise tools to extend the use of our hands (hammers and axes), our feet (the wheel and the Mercedes), and even our eyes (the telescope and microscope). We classify inanimate objects as masculine or feminine, and our old system of weights and measures was based, by and large, on the proportions of the human body. In fact, we still measure horses by hands and whiskey by fingers. It is only *natural* for us to be concerned with apparently borderline cases. Saliva, excreta, and nail-clippings have magical properties, precisely because they were but are not part of us. Disputed boundaries are always dangerous.

The most important boundaries on our lives are the basic facts of "birth, copulation, and death," in Eliot's phrase. They are all periods of transition and times when the social order is threatened by disruption. We hedge them about with laws and taboos in an attempt to defuse the danger and reassert society's right to control even our grief, our joy, and our intimacy. The rituals which surround a marriage or a burying help to "create a reality which would be nothing without them. It is not too much to say that ritual is more to society than words are to thought. For it is very possible to know something and then find words for it. But it is impossible to have social relations without symbolic acts."

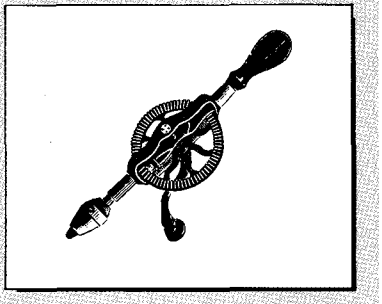
Modern men have done their best to do without symbolic acts. In the name of enlightenment and humanity, the ritual forms which gave meaning—and even existence—to our inchoate passions and aspirations have all, by and large, been swept away as so much insincerity. The points raised by Douglas in 1966 (reissued by the wisdom of the publishers) now seem more than ever like warnings. "If a ritual is suppressed in one form," she observed, "it crops up in others, more strongly the more intense the social interaction." No society can survive without ritual and taboo, but it is equally true that rituals are not generalized abstractions: they are an inextricable part of the social order which they help to reinforce. Change the ritual and you change the society. The strong new social rites offered by the likes of Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh and Sun Myung Moon may have their merits as religions, but they are not the fruits of a centuries-long adjustment to Western social life. They go straight to the raw nerves of existence and serve to reinforce a sort of culture that we in the West have not experienced since we learned to make tools out of bronze. As the symbols of our common life become extinct, they are being replaced by sectarian fetishes which serve to divide, not unite us. A people that loses its national rituals is no longer a nation. It is an uneasy federation of tribes. (TJF) cc

LIBERAL ARTS

Soul of Moderation

Brian De Palma, a master of contemporary American cinema, explained his personal code of decorum to the *Chicago Tribune*. It isn't easy to murder people creatively, he argued:

> But I know what I'm doing. I know when I have a guy pick up a drill there's gonna be a lot of people be offended by it. But it seemed to me to be the right instrument for that time in the movie. He could have strangled her or hit her over the head with a club. But I thought this way was best. . . . Don't make it sound like I went crazy with that scene. When he finally drills her, I didn't show the drill going into her body. I could have done that, but I didn't. cc



IN FOCUS

Say a Little Prayer

by Steven Hayward

George Goldberg: ***Reconstructing America;*** Wm. B. Eerdmans; Grand Rapids, MI.

Many years ago Leo Strauss remarked that the Supreme Court is more likely to defer to the contentions of social science than to the Ten Commandments as the words of the living God. Strauss was, of course, basing his observation on the use of social science in *Brown* v. *Board of Education* in 1954, but he did not live to see the other shoe drop; in 1980 the high court ruled that a Kentucky statute requiring the posting of the Ten Commandments in public schoolrooms violated the "establishment" clause of the First Amendment.

The Kentucky case illustrates the current state of judicial wisdom on the subject of "separation of church and state." The relevant clause of the First Amendment reads: "Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Well, *Congress* made no law; the Kentucky legislature did. But the modern Supreme Court, in a fit of judicial irredentism, has applied the "establishment" clause to state actions as well by way of the 14th Amendment's "equal protection" clause. Goldberg, a Jewish lawyer, outlines the history of the Court's debauchery of the First Amendment's intention, from the first church-state cases at the beginning of this century right through the 1984 Pawtucket crèche case.

Goldberg cannot contain outbursts of just indignation at the Court's tendentious reasoning on religion cases. It has come to this: a public school teacher would probably lose his job for leading a prayer in the classroom, while a teacher who showed a pornographic movie would be successfully defended by the ACLU (Anti-Christian Litigation Unit?) on First Amendment "free expression" grounds.

And what about the "free exercise" clause of the Amendment's religion clause? In the current judicial interpretation, the "establishment" clause eats up the "free exercise" clause, such that even a "moment of silence" in public schools is proscribed, as well as *voluntary* religious meetings on school grounds during off hours. Surely this flies in the face of the intention of the Framers of the First Amendment, who, recognizing the salutary effects of reli-

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gious sentiment on the public order, sought to encourage the proliferation and vigor of religious life. Reading Goldberg, you get the feeling that what is most needed is a moment of silence for the Supreme Court. ∞

Steven Hayward is an editor of the Claremont Review.

Embattled Preacher

Dinesh D'Souza: *Falwell, Before the Millennium;* Regnery Gateway; Chicago.

The Rev. Jerry Falwell is one of the most frequently pilloried men in America today. Journalists and liberal politicians are fond of comparing him to Hitler, Khomeini, and Jim Jones and brand him a "racist," "fascist," and "intolerant bigot." Ultrafundamentalists like Bob Jones denounce him as a "heretic" and "apostate." Readers of *Falwell* will find little to justify either set of epithets. The main trouble with Jerry Falwell is actually his moderation. When Bob Jones labeled him "a dangerous man," he was referring to Falwell's willingness to work with nonfundamentalists and even non-Christians on social and political issues.

What has turned both national opinion leaders and some of the fundamentalist fringe against Falwell is that he is a man of tolerance. He has alienated Bob Jones by keeping a civil margin around conviction, which permits cooperation between groups—fundamentalist, evangelical, Jewish, Catholic, and Mormon—profoundly different in theology yet sharing common social concerns. He has disturbed the intellectual community because he refuses to make "tolerance" a *substitute for* faith. He understands that those who champion tolerance as the supreme good are trying to make virtue out of a radical skepticism that cannot tolerate any profound expression of belief. Believing in tolerance as a secondary virtue, the students at Falwell's Liberty Bible College granted Senator Kennedy a polite and attentive hearing for his lecture on pluralism. Subscribing to nothing but tolerance, students at Harvard broke into chants of "Hitler, Falwell go to hell!" whenever Falwell mentioned anything religious, patriotic, or traditional in his speech there.

Falwell's detractors have other reasons for their hostility. Fundamentalists and liberals alike attack his decision to advocate his moral convictions politically. Falwell himself once anathematized clerical involvement in politics. But after *Roe* v. *Wade*, he reluctantly concluded that amoral government had so invaded the ethical and religious domain that someone had to fight back. And it is chiefly a shrewd political fighter—outspoken at times, but usually restrained—that emerges in this biography: a picture of a man who has made common decency into a potent public force. Falwell may not be quite the "strongest and perhaps most articu-

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late defender" of "the Judeo-Christian tradition" but as a characterization it is closer to the mark than the usual invectives. An index (not to mention proofreading) would have increased the usefulness of this book. cc

Media Quislings

James L. Tyson: *Target America: The Influence of Communist Propaganda on U.S. Media;* Regnery Gateway; Chicago.

Most Americans understand that "news" from *Tass* is about as reliable as promises from real-estate speculators. Both are capable of paving swampland with hyperbole. What relatively few of us realize, however, is to what extent *American* news reports are swayed by procommunist attitudes. James L. Tyson documents, in disturbing detail, the similarities between what many American journalists and intellectuals offer in their articles and broadcasts and what is found in *Pravda* or *Izvestia*. This exposé deserves serious attention before *samizdat* presses in South Dakota or Idaho become our only reliable source of news. cc

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God and Man at Hillsdale

***The Christian Vision: Man in Society;* Edited by Lynne Morris;** The Hillsdale College Press; Hillsdale, MI.

"Where there is no vision," says Proverbs, "the people perish." Because the vision provided by Judeo-Christianity has been fading for some time on America's campuses, college graduates informed by a sense of purpose and meaning have become rare. As Stephen Muller, president of Johns Hopkins has suggested, higher education may now be producing merely "highly skilled barbarians." At Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan, a serious effort is being made to reverse this trend by instituting a multidisciplinary Christian Studies Program. To initiate this program, Hillsdale invited a number of leading Christian scholars to join in a week-long convocation exploring the significance of their faith in such diverse fields as physics (Stanley Jaki), literature (Thomas Howard), political science (Gerhart Niemeyer), pedagogy (Carl F. H. Henry and Thomas Burke), psychology (Paul Vitz), and philosophy (James Packer). More such efforts are needed to resolve what Professor Henry correctly identifies as the current "intellectual and moral crisis" in Western civilization. cc

WASTE OF MONEY

Duo-Tone

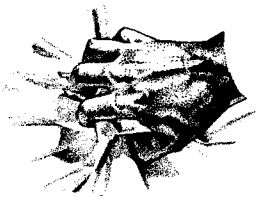
by Gary S. Vasilash

G. Cabrera Infante: *Infante's Inferno;* Harper & Row; New York.

A wire service photo run in some U.S. newspapers prior to the November "elections" in Nicaragua featured an image that is both familiar and disorienting. The setting: a campaign rally in Managua for Sandinista presidential candidate Daniel Ortega. The center of focus: a young girl, perhaps 13 or 14, who is wearing a conventional majorette-style uniform—sparkles and spangles. However, instead of twirling a baton or pushing pom-poms, the girl is holding a flag in one hand . . . and a toy machine gun in the other. Rah-rah, shish, boom bang?

Lately, there has been a proliferation of documents coming into North America from the more-heated regions to the south. The items—photographic, journalistic, cinematic, novelistic—are not always what we might expect. In effect, many of us are suddenly discovering a world that is wholly unlike what we thought we knew—because we never really knew it. Our images, protest though we may, are a collage of Taco Bell, *I Love Lucy*, and the samba.

One of the more interesting writers with roots in Latin America is G. Cabrera Infante. Infante was born in Cuba. In time he became Castro's head of the Council of Culture; in the early 60's he was with the Cuban embassy in Brussels as cultural attaché. Infante is no longer passing out paperbacks or screening films on a sheet for the benefit of his uniformed countrymen in Africa or other countries closer to home. Infante lives in capitalist London.



Infante's Inferno, an apparently semiautobiographical *Bildungsroman,* has obvious *literariness* which gives it the texture of a bona fide novel. However, the admirable quality very rapidly becomes a sore point as Infante becomes too literary for his—or the reader's—good. His obsession with *double entendre* is a case in point. Infante racks (and I'm talking about the torture device here) his store of literary and cinematic knowledge in order to come up with puns that go from amusing to tedious in short order, as he piles one upon the other and then onto the others. Speaking of a young girl, an object of his youthful lust (which ages but never wanes), he says: "She too was an adolescent. How green was my Valli then!" That would be fine if it were not in close proximity to lines like one about a prostitute (all female figures figure into this mold in one way or another): "Perhaps the erroneous notion of the unhappy whore was learned in *Nana*—whatever Zola wants, Zola gets." The novel begins to resemble a dense, long-playing record. Because the grooves are so closely packed, there is a tendency for the stylus to leap about the surface. At first, the skips are jarring and unexpected. Soon, they are anticipated and annoying. Eventually we discard the disk. cc

Gary Vasilash is contributing editor to Chronicles of Culture.

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Marketing 101

Jean-Claude Courdy: *The Japanese: Everyday Life in the Empire of the Rising Sun*; Harper & Row; New York.

Matthew Perry sailed into Tokyo Bay in 1853. President Fillmore was interested in putting an end to Japan's isolation policy. Commodore Perry stuck around the harbor until the empire agreed to open trade negotiations. A trade agreement was reached. Check the current balance-of-trade deficit figure. Then think about Perry's mission. It's interesting to note that his older brother, Oliver Hazard Perry, said in another context, "We have met the enemy and they are ours." The present situation brings to mind another line: "You asked for it, you got it: Toyota."

The Japanese—Honda plants in Ohio and Seikos on practically every wrist notwithstanding—are a curiosity to many Americans. A lion's share of the interest in the Japanese comes from business and industry. That interest has resulted in a proliferation of books describing management techniques. Since the day-to-day experiences of Japanese existence are rarely touched on in such texts, we might assume that a book with the title *The Japanese: Everyday Life in the Empire of the Rising Sun* would provide a helpful balance to the Theory Z. These expectations are not fulfilled by Courdy, who was head of the French Radio-Television Bureau in Tokyo from 1963 to 1970.

Less than a field guide to life in Japan, the book is a resumé of Courdy's personal life (dealing with traffic jams; trying to pick up women), that's solidified with a few trivial facts (e.g., one of the observations in a section improbably titled "Realities": "Japanese homes are 100 percent equipped with television sets, more than 92 percent of which are color sets"), and spiced with bland sociopolitical comments like: "The United States does not welcome being defeated on its home turf of technological superiority." Apart from the growing interest in Japanese business, the main reason for the book's existence is Courdy's belief that he's a fascinating and rather erudite guy.

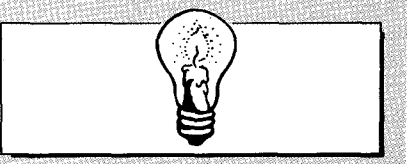
While we can certainly stand to learn lessons from the Japanese—about respect for family and for cultural tradition, for example—the source for such enlightenment is not a guide to Zen techniques for the boardroom, nor is it *The Japanese*. (GSV) cc

LIBERAL ARTS

Curse the Darkness

New York, a magazine with *foie gras* for its gray matter, devoted the 1984 year-end issue to the virtues of The City. Seventy-nine leading New Yorkers were asked for their opinions. Diana Vreeland spoke for the majority when she announced:

> New York is the leading light of the twentieth century.



And what a century it's been! When Lord Grey saw the lamps going out all over Europe some 70 years ago, the blackout must have been caused by a power-surge in Manhattan. cc

Canonizing Eleanor

J. William T. Youngs: *Eleanor Roosevelt: A Personal and Public Life;* Little, Brown; Boston.

No First Lady in this century has so fully captured the American imagination as Eleanor Roosevelt—only Jacqueline Kennedy has even come close. During the dark hours of the Depression and World War II, Eleanor became a symbol of hope for millions of Americans. A tireless public figure, she traveled throughout the country encouraging the unemployed and disheartened. During the war, she visited hundreds of wounded American servicemen both in the United States and in the South Pacific. Thousands drew inspiration from her letters, speeches, and newspaper and magazine articles.

For all her virtues, Mrs. Roosevelt hardly deserves the hagiography J. William T. Youngs has produced. In order to portray his subject as "virtually an American saint" and "the greatest American woman of the twentieth century," Youngs had to ignore the dubious aspects of Eleanor Roosevelt's life. It makes for a superficial—and short—book. Indeed, in his uncritical adulation Youngs mirrors what was probably Eleanor's greatest fault: boundless naiveté. After 50 years of disaster in "progressive" social engineering, Eleanor's simpleminded faith in innate human goodness, social reform, women's rights, and wealth redistribution now seems childish. Even the reform-minded FDR wisely dismissed many of his wife's ideas as hopeless pipedreams. Unfortunately, Eleanor's credulous views on foreign policy were all too close to the President's own. Youngs puts the best possible face on things: "Eleanor had none of the exaggerated fears of those who believed that Russia was completely evil." Stunned at FDR's death by revelations of his infidelity (though her own conduct with Joseph Lash seems suspect), Eleanor continued to place implicit trust in all the vows pronounced at international altars by "Uncle Joe" and other communist leaders.

We may be as glad over Eleanor's many good works as with the failure of her utopian fantasies to be taken seriously by her contemporaries. However, her canonization in the 1980's is symbolic of how far we have come in legislating Never-Never Land. cc

Reinventing the Universe

***Philosophy and Science Fiction;* Edited by Michael Philips; Prometheus Books; Buffalo, NY.**

It is not exactly a new idea to consider the philosophical dimensions of science fiction. This anthology, which seems designed for one of Prof. Philips's freshman survey courses, contains a few good, if obvious, selections from Stanislaw Lem, Borges, and Karel Capek in addition to several dreadful exercises in the genre by Robert Heinlein, Isaac Asimov, Norman Spinrad, and—the inevitably anthologized *The Machine Stops*—E. M. Forster, all prefaced by an introduction which seems to reduce ethics and metaphysics to matters of opinion, all of them fashionable. The curious reader will have to search other galaxies for the libertarian/traditionalist Poul Anderson or the unpredictable Harlan Ellison. There was a time when philosophers were also men of letters with literary taste; none of them, from Plato to Bergson, would have the patience to read, much less edit, this anthology. cc

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SCREEN

A Film Vacuum

by Stephen Macaulay

***Falling in Love;* Directed by Ulu Grosbard: Written by Michael Cristofer; Paramount Pictures.**

Anyone who believes that an actor or an actress "makes" a film should sit through *Falling in Love*. Twice. Once for Robert De Niro. Once for Meryl Streep. Those two, certainly, are among the finest American players in the cinema. De Niro, whose eyes can shift from laughter to concern in an instant, and Streep, who is able to make the trip from innocence to experience and back, are, quite simply, the two leading performers of their generation—if only for their scenes together in *The Deer Hunter*.

In *Falling in Love* De Niro plays a contractor who builds high rises in New York City—an honest, down-to-earth guy. Streep is a free-lance commercial artist who does pastel renderings fit only for menu covers in fern bars that specialize in spritzers. He is married and the father of two. She is also married but childless; she and her husband lost a baby soon after birth. Both families live in the suburbs—but not the cookie-cutter variety.

Writer Michael Cristofer and director Ulu Grosbard must get Frank and Molly together. They do so through contrivance after contrivance. The implausibility breeds impatience. Given the obvious outcome—the title is, after all, *Falling in Love*—the amazing thing is that the relationship that Cristofer and Grosbard create is as lifeless as a paragraph from a physics textbook. There is no passion. To be sure, two attractive people can meet and find themselves attracted to one another, but they have—or should have—a long way to go between that meeting and the unceremonious dumping of their respective spouses. There must be changes, transformations. Yet in *Falling in Love* Frank and Molly have a free-fall in a vacuum: no resistance, no friction. What is the point? is the question that never gets answered, along with the more rudimentary one, Why?

The only remarkable thing about *Falling in Love* is that although its vector is aimed straight at adultery, the characters have scruples of a sort. By the time they get around to kissing, one is ready to applaud for the sake of shaking off the numbness. And there is no skin. None—which goes to show there can be something in nothing. And nothing is what *Falling in Love* surely is—De Niro and Streep notwithstanding. cc

Macho Machines and Female Role Models: *The Terminator*

by E. Christian Kopff

***The Terminator*: Directed by James Cameron; Written by James Cameron and Gale Anne Hurd; Orion.**

The Terminator is a machine, designed by other machines to hunt down and kill human beings. At first, one feels the same way about the movie *Terminator* itself: it is perfectly constructed to excite, frighten, dazzle, and arouse other appropriate emotions in the average American movie audience (which nowadays seems to be half teenager and a quarter young adult). After the initial thrill or shock wears off, however, the viewer begins to realize that the movie is not only skillfully crafted popular entertainment, it also conveys clearly—and not without subtlety—some important points of popular morality.

Since most of America has seen it by now, I will not be spoiling anyone's fun if I talk about the plot—a sort of spin-off of *War Games*, in which Norad's computer threatens to start World War III on its own in order to teach erring mankind a lesson. In *The Terminator*, the machines of the future provoke nuclear war in order to destroy mankind. When they are only partially successful, they turn to other devices to accomplish their nefarious end (among them cyborgs, machines that look like humans). Eventually, however, a leader appears among men—one John Connor—who rouses the human survivors to a successful resistance against the machines. The machines have only one hope. They send their latest model human destroyer, the Terminator (played by Arnold Schwarzenegger, world-class body builder and star of the *Conan* movies) into the past in order to destroy John Connor's mother before she can bear him. The humans also get one man, Kyle, through before destroying the time machine. In the world of 1984's Los Angeles these two—marvelously programmed cyborg and brave and determined human—wander, seeking Sarah Connor (Linda Hamilton), one to kill, the other to save her.

Sarah Connor, as it turns out, is a silly contemporary American girl, working as a (lousy) waitress in a fast-food joint and living for her weekend dates with equally silly young men with fast cars. (When one of them stands her up, her indignant roommate tells her, "He can't do that to you, even if he does own a Porsche!") Then one horrible, ordinary Friday all the other Sarah Connors in L.A. start dying violent deaths, one after the other. And she realizes that she is being followed.

There ensue all the car crashes and shootings and blowing up of cars, buildings, and human beings (in order of moral significance) that any teenager could desire. The tension never lets up, and each time our hero from the future blows Schwarzenegger away, he gets up and starts chasing Sarah again.

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If you are into scary, this is one radical flick.

The movie's promoters have wisely chosen to sell it as an Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle, and so it has been reviewed and so praised as good of its lowly kind. The good thing about movie reviewers is that if you don't tell them what a movie is about, they will never guess on their own. I say this because the movie is not about Arnold Schwarzenegger, as wonderfully well-cast as he is as a creature that looks human only on first glance. (Did you know that machines have Austrian accents?) The movie is about how one frivolous, not very smart or very chaste American girl of 1984 learns how to become a woman. I mean that last word in its full intensity, since a number of films in the last few years have had an apparently similar theme, from *Private Benjamin* and *Alien* to the last two *Dirty Harry*s and even, as a subplot, *Red Dawn*. In each of these movies, however, the women learn to survive and triumph in a man's world of violence and power by mastering men's violent skills and attitudes. But in *The Terminator* Sarah Connor learns how to be a woman by making real love to a real man, by bearing his child and bringing that child up to be a survivor and a leader.

The two mandatory sex scenes make the point emphatically. In the first, Sarah's roommate and her boyfriend make "passionate" love, while she listens to her radio with her earphones, rocking and rolling in both meanings of that term. Sarah and Kyle's decision to make love comes after fighting and learning together and in full consciousness that they are begetting the future leader of their race. The first scene is funny in the best traditions of current teenage exploitation movies; the second is serious, even solemn.

Although this is a movie about *Bildung*, education, the actual learning is played down; we are left to infer it. When Kyle must leave Sarah for a while, he gives her a gun. She puts it aside with disgust and proceeds to make a reckless telephone call that will lead the Terminator straight to them. But by the end, the pregnant Sarah is leaving the city to drive into the mountains, cradling her gun and telling to a tape recorder what her son will need to know to accomplish his mission in the future. Sigourney Weaver in *Alien*, to mention another successful sci-fi flick, also triumphs over nonhuman violence, but basically as a woman who learns how to be Captain Kirk. In *Terminator*, Linda Hamilton triumphs over the nonhuman and in the process learns what it means to be a woman, with a woman's duties and capacities and a woman's role. *Terminator* is one of the most explicitly reactionary films of the past decade. When are they going to notice?

A few hours passed viewing a recent prestige film, *Falling in Love*, provokes another thought. Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep put on *tour de force* performances as two middle-class suburbanites who develop an obsessive passion for one another that destroys

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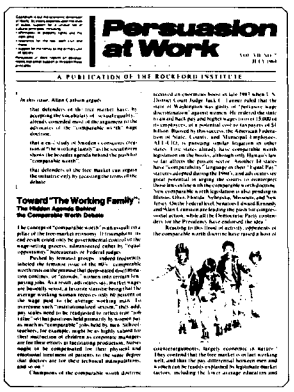
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their marriages and their personal lives. The perfection of the actors' technique only underlines the moral obtuseness of these two destructive middle-aged adolescents.

Traditionally, popular art was meant to be and was proud to be pure entertainment. If you want to send a message, call Western Union, quipped one Hollywood mogul. High art, on the other hand, tried to unite the *utile* and the *dulce*, to use Horace's terms, to mingle pleasure and instruction. We have reversed all that. The expensive films with big name stars are now exercises in technique, which is the politest I can get about *Falling in Love*. Vulgar art, the films of Eastwood and John Milius, for instance, or *The A Team* and *Magnum*, teach courage and patriotism and what it means to be a man or a woman.

"When the cities lie at the monster's feet, there are left the mountains," I thought with Robinson Jeffers, as Sarah Connor drives off at the end of *Terminator*. The treason of the cultural elite is consummated. When the citadels of high culture have fallen to frivolity and obscenity, there is still, what? Mr. T. Tom Selleck. Clint Eastwood. And, yes, *The Terminator*. cc

E. Christian Kopff is professor of classics at the University of Colorado and an editor of Classic Journal.

Inventing the News

by Herbert London

***The Killing Fields;* Directed by Roland Joffe; Enigma Productions.**

Any resemblance between *The Killing Fields* and events in Cambodia during the 1975 holocaust is purely coincidental. What we see on the screen is more often than not a figment of Sydney Schanberg's well-developed imagination. This film adaptation of Schanberg's *New York Times Magazine* story (January 20, 1980) about the war in Cambodia and his relationship with his Cambodian assistant, Dith Pran, is supposed to recount the bloody victory of the Communist Khmer Rouge forces and the systematic destruction of the national soul.

Mr. Schanberg believes that it is the United States and its misguided Southeast Asia policy that is responsible for the holocaust in Cambodia. Somehow, the American intrusion into Cambodian territory gets identified with the barbarity of Pol Pot's army of thugs. Repeatedly, "Schanberg" puts the blame on Nixon because he violated Cambodian neutrality in 1970. What he ignores is the North Vietnamese role: the words "communist invasion" and "North Vietnam" are not used in the script at all. Moreover, our first introduction to an American soldier is a major engaged in covering up an inadvertent bombing in a populated Cambodian region. Schanberg never mentions the fact that, from the outset of the war, the Vietcong and North Vietnamese used Cambodian neutrality for their own purposes, or that Pol Pot and his followers were trained in terror tactics by their communist brethren.

When President Nixon's face appears on the screen to defend a doctrine of taking the war to enemy sanctuaries, tears well in "Schanberg's" eyes as he (presumably) recalls his friends in Pnom Penh being slaughtered by the Khmer Rouge. We can only wonder whether Schanberg was more angry at Nixon or the actual killers.

The *New York Times* argues that reporters like Schanberg are to be commended for calling attention to this "unhappy chapter in the history of recent United States diplomacy in Southeast Asia," but overlooks the part played by reporters like Schanberg in helping to produce this unhappy chapter in our history. Schanberg, Neil Sheehan, Seymour Hersh, and David Halberstam were honored by the press corps for excoriating American policies, but most people did not know that the reporters were actually making policy. By distorting events, they managed to create a popular antiwar, anti-Johnson, and anti-Nixon movement. That movement led to the congressional decision to cut our losses and leave Southeast Asia. With no opposition in its way, the Khmer Rouge made their self-proclaimed Kampuchea into an open graveyard.

Like Schanberg's reporting, *The Killing Fields* is more a work of fiction than a work of journalism—a deft manipulation of the facts to make the Vietnam War conform to Mr. Schanberg's prejudices. This subjective reportage is what is now known as the "new journalism." But there is nothing new about journalists who get rich by tailoring the news. cc

Herbert London is dean of the Gallatin Division of New York University.

Humor and Intelligence

***Comfort and Joy;* Written and Directed by Bill Forsyth; a Universal Release.**

At one point in *Comfort and Joy*, Alan Bird, a Glasgow disc jockey/radio personality who immersed himself in a feud between Mr. Bunny and Mr. McCool, two mobile ice cream vending companies, makes an attempt at reconciling the warring parties (reminiscent of rival Chicago bootleggers of the 1920's) by appealing to a sense of proportion. After all, he points out, the issue is ice cream, which isn't, in the larger context of things, particularly important. Instead of making a metaphysical rebuttal, the ice cream man simply asks Bird what greater contribution a DJ makes to humanity.

Alan Bird eventually discovers that his broadcast antics do make a contribution to something beyond advertiser revenues: he meets an elderly woman in a hospital who tells him that he brings a smile into her life every morning. What more could he desire? Similarly, ice cream brings joy into people's lives. It may not be the sort of joy that induces raptures or finds outlet in lyric poetry, but it can provide a moment or two of solace in a world dominated by disaster.

Bill Forsyth's film will never attain the status of a classic—and even Academy Award nomination is doubtful—but like his previous films, *Gregory's Girl* and *Local Hero*, it is sufficiently refreshing to be a minor consolation. Perhaps that doesn't seem like a lot to expect from a film, but in the greater realm of filmdom, it is a tremendous task that Forsyth performs with wit, humor, and intelligence. cc

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The Wild (and Tranquil) West

American intellectuals have spent much of this century blaming the frontier experience for everything from cultural poverty (John Crowe Ransom) to "our lawless heritage" (James Truslow Adams). The high rates of violent crime in modern cities, they insist, cannot be caused by anything we are doing now—that is, hamstringing the law enforcement system, handing out six-month sentences for rape, and eternally justifying criminal behavior as the result of economic and racial discrimination. In the minds of academics, our violent ways are inherited from the social anarchy of frontier towns, where we acquired our fascination with firearms. This argument, the stock-in-trade of gun-control fanatics, will have trouble surviving the scrutiny of Roger McGrath in *Gunfighters, Highwaymen & Vigilantes: Violence on the Frontier* (University of California; Berkeley).

To get a sense of the level of violent crime in the West, McGrath looked at the records of two mining towns in the Sierra Nevadas, Aurora and Bodie, which had dismal reputations for lawlessness. The "Badmen of Bodie" became so proverbial throughout California that crimes all over the West were attributed (usually falsely) to its former inhabitants. There was crime, to be sure, in the mining towns and badmen aplenty. The tales of their exploits alone are enough to make the book entertaining. But was the frontier more crime-ridden than New York or Chicago? The robbery rate in Bodie is computed at 84 per 100,000 inhabitants (on the FBI scale) as opposed to the 1980 rates in New York—1,140, Miami—995, and Chicago—294. In fact, the rate for the entire U.S. including rural areas was 243. For burglaries, Bodie's rate of 6.4 compares favorably with Miami's 3,282, New York's 2,661, and—the lowest-rated city in the U.S.—Grand Forks' 587. The rate of theft in the U.S. (1980) is 17 times that of Bodie. It is harder to compare the data on rape, since Bodie and Aurora offer *no recorded cases*. Still, the national rate in 1980 was at least 10 times the calculated rate for Boston 1880-82.

The real question, then, is why was the Old West so peaceful and crime-free? For one thing, the miners and young toughs brought with them a code of manners and decency which made distinctions. The

mining towns had few women, and most of them prostitutes, but a decent woman was safe not just from outrage but from insult. It was a man's world—not even prostitutes went into the saloons—but the men respected innocence and honesty when they saw it. They did not worry too much about crimes against property, because—as McGrath points out repeatedly—they were *all* armed. A thief thinks twice before making an attempt upon a man as armed and dangerous as himself. Of course, a few stagecoaches were robbed, but not when they were carrying large shipments of gold: those were too well-guarded. Capital punishment may not deter crime, but a shotgun rammed under your nose will do it every time.

The one violent crime in which the miners definitely excelled was homicide. The homicide rate in the U.S. today is one-sixth that of Aurora and one-eleventh that of Bodie. And yet there is a difference. The overwhelming number of killings in the mining towns was "between consenting adults." The killer—who might be better described as the survivor—was almost always acquitted on the grounds of self-defense. Men and women who did not hang out in saloons looking for trouble could sleep safely in their beds. In the very few cases in which an innocent or harmless man was killed, the reaction of the community was swift and certain: the killers were tried and hanged in an orderly fashion by the local Committee of Vigilance. The vigilantes explained their actions as insurance against a breakdown in due process. However, if we can judge from parallel cases in other societies, these "lynchings" were also an effective means of expressing community sentiment. They made it all too clear that, while they were willing to tolerate nearly any level of dueling, brawling, and consensual homicide, real murder was a kind of sacrilege against the social bond.

Men live more by myths than facts and the legends of the Old West are one of the main battlegrounds in the struggle for the American soul. For good or ill, this has been a nation of individualists and of community associations that managed to function reasonably well without too much attention from the State. Our life on the frontier was not anarchic or even libertarian. We lived according to a code. When that code was violated, men typically helped themselves to justice. Such a system has its perils, but it cannot be blamed for the contemporary dissolution of law and order in American cities. The real and true myth of the West is of Americans who had intimations of right and wrong and could deliver, even informally, a quality of justice which our vast judicial apparatus seems unable to manage. cc

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The New Republic *has published* an anniversary issue (1914-1984) devoted to its own history. Professor John P. Diggins subtitles this epic as "seventy years of enlightened mistakes, principled compromises, and unconventional wisdom"—an absolution by way of paradoxes. In fact, Prof. Diggins's report reads as a tale of foolish wise men who may always claim the privilege of a time-warp or historical corrective, which delivers them from all responsibility for what they were "then" thinking, writing, and extolling. The immaturity of a young Walter Lippmann and the smelly Stalinism of a ripe Malcolm Cowley are not, to our mind, the most honorable pages in the annals of American journalism. The newest rendition of *TNR* under the stewardship of Martin Peretz, for all its dialectical arrogance and ideological superstition, seems to us a vast improvement over what *TNR* was in its heyday of "enlightened mistakes." cc

ABC launched **Call to Glory** with an heroic promotional effort during the Summer Olympics. The series, which chronicles the life of a reconnaissance pilot and his family in the early 1960's, is frequently described as unabashedly pro-American. Obviously, ABC hoped to cash in on the "New Patriotism" generated by the games. The show was an overnight success as millions of Americans turned with relief to a program which promised them a positive vision—not just of the military—but of a normal, mainstream family. However, the favorable reaction of the national press should have been a clue that something was wrong. *The Christian Science Monitor* called it a "tale of compassion and understanding," while the *New York Times* discovered in it "the stuff of high drama."

Of course, some reporters were afraid that ABC had sold out to the Pentagon. They should have known better. Despite the depiction of an essentially decent family and despite the favorable portrayal of the military profession, the producers of *Call to Glory* have injected their episodes with enough sugary platitudes to trigger insulin shock in the viewing audience. In episode after episode we are asked to believe that military officers in the 1960's were dewy-eyed over John Kennedy and Martin Luther King and that Adlai Stevenson was busy saving the world for democracy. Still worse, the heroic Col. Sarnac is as calm as Ward Cleaver and as nonsexist as Alan Alda. It took just one episode for the *Wall Street Journal* to realize that Sarnac was only "a carefully concocted masculine ideal, humanized according to Hollywood's post 1960's, post feminist, pacifist-but-looking-for-heroes sensibility." By November, enough people had watched enough episodes to make up their minds. Predictably, the ratings started to slide. Still, ABC authorized the producers—who also gave us such wholesome classics as *The Burning Bed* and *Risky Business*—to film nine more shows to finish the season. After all, there are some things more important than money. cc

Richard Brautigan was a familiar American type that has been with us since the days of the Yankee peddler: the self-appointed Job who wants to take on the powers that be from his chair behind the cracker barrel, the freshman who writes a history of the world without a bibliography, the guttersnipe journalist who runs the risk of becoming rich and famous by attacking Presidents—all examples of the insufferable arrogance of the common man in the presence of something beyond his grasp. Ambrose Bierce at his worst, Richard Brautigan at his best. In one of his earliest books, *A Confederate General From Big Sur*, Brautigan took his best cheap shots at men who lived and died defending things which a perennial dropout could never understand. The book dropped out of sight as soon as it was published in 1965, but by 1968 when it was reprinted, Brautigan was being hailed as the prophet of the counterculture.

If Brautigan started out ahead of his time, fame and his contemporaries caught up with him. *Trout Fishing in America* made him one of many overnight gurus to a disaffected generation. He spoke to many of the same longings as Paul Goodman and Philip Slater, but he was a lot easier to read than a literate Bohemian or a sociologist-turned-philosopher. On occasion, Brautigan could bring off a vignette which seemed to make as much paradoxical sense as a line of Bob Dylan. (In the 60's we didn't read, we meditated.) Although he called his fictions novels, he never displayed the slightest sign of ability for sustained narrative. He had a sort of talent but never bothered to learn how to work or to be self-critical. Like too many young artists he learned to live on his juices, but by the age of 49 the juices had begun to dry up, leaving the bitter aftertaste of pleasures that have not been paid for. At his best, Brautigan was a sentimental wise guy doing monologues for his friends; at his worst—especially in what he called verse—a poet *manqué*.

In his life and career Brautigan displayed a mass of contradictions oddly emblematic of his generation: the darling of the drug culture who never used the stuff, the affectionate lover who could not bear to hear the name of his second wife, the futurist who refused to learn how to drive, the man of many friends who managed to kill himself and lie unnoticed for five weeks. In an interview with *People* (8 June 1981), he confessed:

> Maybe I'm an anachronism—not of the past but of the future. A portent.

Perhaps he was—an anachronism who started out ahead in the race and ended up so far behind he gave up running. cc

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Cleanth Brooks has been named the 1985 Jefferson Lecturer by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Mr. Brooks, who is best known for his works of literary theory and his expositions of William Faulkner, is one of the last of the band of prophets who found themselves at Vanderbilt University in the 1920's. Too young to contribute to *I'll Take My Stand* (published in 1928, the year of his graduation), Mr. Brooks did supply "A Plea to the Protestant Churches" for the later volume, *Who Owns America?* A devout Anglican, Cleanth Brooks took an active role in the struggle to save the *Prayerbook*, and for the half-century celebration of the Agrarian manifesto he wrote an essay on "The Enduring Faith" for *Why the South Will Survive*. The NEH has honored itself and the American people by recognizing the merits of a man who gives old meaning to the phrase "a gentleman and a scholar." cc

REVISIONS

Socinian Socialism

The worst thing that can happen to most idealists is to realize their ideals: they have no one to blame the consequences on—except themselves. This is the figure Michael Harrington cuts in *The Politics at God's Funeral: The Spiritual Crisis of Western Civilization* (New York; Holt, Rinehart & Winston). As a "democratic Marxist" and atheist, Harrington realizes that he is part of a long line of thinkers who have prayed for the end of religious faith. "God," he observes, "has been a leading conservative in Judeo-Christian society." His funeral was supposed to be a joyous event ushering in a new age of equality and justice. That religious faith, if not God himself, is dying, Harrington documents all too well. Although recent sociological surveys indicate that America is as religious as it has ever been, relatively few Americans (especially among the elite) now attempt to conform either their lives or their thinking to any well-defined set of religious doctrines. When almost half of the clergymen admit to having made no attempt to convert anyone *in the last decade*, devotion is in serious trouble.

But now that leading theologians and clerics are cheerfully providing God with "a Christian burial," Harrington is beginning to have serious misgivings. The disappearance of faith sought by Marxism has not produced properly Marxist results. On the one hand, Harrington sees Western hedonism and decadence, while on the other he sees communist totalitarianism. In neither "late capitalism" nor "mature communism" has Marx's Promethean vision come to fruition. Harrington is left in the embarrassing position of having to apologize for a mentor who was "naive with regard to the ease with which socialist values would replace religious values." Besides, Harrington reminds us, despite a few "careless" antireligious passages Marx did not really hate religion, just the socioeconomic structures that make religion necessary. If this hairsplitting seems less edifying than counting the angels dancing on the head of a pin, then so too do many of Harrington's other revisionist arguments. Disgusted by the "cult of No God" now regnant in the Soviet Union, Harrington repudiates it as almost the "exact opposite" of *true* Marxism. Properly understood, Marxism, he contends, is simply humanism and does not seek to create a substitute religion but does seek to preserve much of the now-threatened moral substance of traditional faith. "The present crisis demands something unprecedented: a united front of believers and atheists in search of a common transcendental which is neither supernatural nor anti-supernatural."

How is this "transcendental" to be found? Naturally, it is through socialist politics and not through prayer or worship. Unfortunately, Harrington cannot point to *any* society at any time that has embodied his vision of the just and true. Even if there were such a society, Marxism is so decidedly *un*transcendent that after years of promoting it, Friedrich Engels could envision no final future for mankind except extinction as "the earth becomes a dead, frozen globe, like the moon."

It becomes harder every day to believe Harrington's assurances that the socialism of the future—decentralized, communitarian, and democratic—will give everyone an equal opportunity to participate in the formulation of the new consensus. The proposed "alliance between the intellectuals and the simple people" will founder on the same rock that has shattered every other egalitarian movement: the need for a leader. When a movement aims to make people forget religion, its leader will have to pose as God. T. S. Eliot saw clearly when he wrote in 1939:

> As political philosophy derives its sanction from ethics, and ethics from the truth of religion, it is only by returning to the eternal source of truth that we can hope for any social organization which will not, to its ultimate destruction, ignore some essential aspect of reality. The term 'democracy' does not contain enough positive content to stand alone against the foes you dislike—it can easily be transformed by them. If you will not have God (and He is a jealous God) you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin.

Harrington admits that the principles he is promoting are mere "clichés" to many people who find it "extremely difficult to take them seriously." Because of this skepticism, he concludes that his program might well fail, leaving us in "catastrophic nihilism." The real danger, however, is that many of America's religious leaders who long ago lost their faith to the World Council of Churches, will regard Harrington's stale agenda as a godsend. cc

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Pulpits and the Press

"The grand Pulpit is now the Press," Thomas Carlyle argued a century and a half ago, adding that "the true Church of England, at this moment, lies in the Editors of its Newspapers. These preach to the people daily, weekly; admonishing kings themselves; advising peace or war, with an authority which only the first Reformers, and a long past clan of Popes were possessed of." "How," Carlyle wrote, "these *two* Churches and Pulpits (the velvet cushion one and the metal-type one) are to adjust their mutual relations and cognate workings: this is a problem which some centuries may be taken up in solving."

More than a century after Carlyle's death, the adjusting of "the mutual relations and cognate workings" of editors and ecclesiastics is far from finished. The last three decades have

seen some curious twists in the relationship between the churches and the media. During the 60's and 70's when many clergymen became involved in the civil rights and antiwar movements, their relations with the press were usually harmonious. In April 1971 *Newsweek* sympathetically discussed clergymen and religious journals involved in criticizing the Vietnam War without consulting any critics from the other side. Three years before, *The Nation* published "No Port for the *Phoenix*," by a member of a Quaker group defying U.S. law by trying to deliver medical supplies to the Red Cross of the Vietnamese National Liberation Front and to antiwar Buddhists.

The New Republic likewise allowed Edward Duff, S.J., the use of their pages for a 1971 article expressing sympathy with the Berrigan brothers. Despite doubts about "the ease with which gospel truths are translated into concrete political programs" by the Berrigans, Fr. Duff lauded the radical brothers for their destruction of draft files and for other illegal acts.

Three years before the Duff article, *TNR* praised clerical activism in the civil rights and antiwar causes in an unsigned editorial, "Clergy and Politics." The editors lamented that "most clergy have traditionally shied away from such participation." But in a short article published in *TNR* about a month later, George Higgins questioned the magazine's endorsement of clergymen in politics:

> Clerical involvement in partisan politics . . . will almost inevitably lead to certain consequences which, upon further reflection, even the editors of *TNR* might conceivably wish to forestall.

A decade and a half later, after the rise of the Religious Right and the Right-to-Life movement, the editors of *TNR* and many other national publications are beginning to agree with Higgins.

Some journalists have even begun to sound a bit like Edmund Burke, who believed that clergymen betray their sacred trust when they cease to speak with the "voice of soothing Christian charity" and venture into politics. The *New York Times*, for example, warned in 1980 that "when ministers preach to 30 million parishioners that only one brand of politics has God's approval there is a terrible danger of intolerance." The *Boston Globe* spoke in similar tones the same year when it denounced antiabortion bishops for bringing "all sorts of unleashed bigotry" into politics.

These reversals in journalistic attitudes toward clerical activism have not gone unnoticed. Writing in *The Nation* (Nov. 1980), Leo P. Ribuffo detected a "double standard" and editorial "snobbery" in media treatment of politically active evangelicals and antiabortion Catholics. Observed Ribuffo:

> [Jerry] Falwell has a point when he complains that his critics never 'accused the National Council of Churches of mixing religion and politics.' It is ironic that theological conservatives are now urged to wait quietly for the Antichrist both by theological liberals, who traditionally denied any distinction between godly work and work-in-the-world, and by secular radicals, who rightly maintain in other contexts that the personal is the political.

The New Republic (11 Oct. 1980) likewise found "more than a trace of inconsistency, even hypocrisy," in denunciations of conservative clergymen by "liberals [who] have never objected to Catholic bishops speaking out in favor of civil rights or New England ministers protesting the arms race." Still, as Higgins predicted, *TNR* was not delighted by "the political organizing of the fundamentalist right, and . . . the Catholic Church's campaign against abortion." Such developments demanded "renewed political energy on the left and among believers in a woman's right to abortion." Disgust at the hypocrisy of the newly critical attitude of many journalists toward clerical activism, however, did not prevent *TNR* from publishing an article (2 Aug. 1980) on "The Danger of Born-Again Politics."

Newsweek is also worried that Reagan's religious views derive from "the narrow agenda of a single religious

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group that on matters of war and peace, Central America and justice for the domestic poor and hungry runs counter to what a majority of American Protestants, Catholics—and possibly evangelicals as well—believe." The President's vision of America makes religion "essentially a personal relationship to God" and seeks for "government noninterference in religion and family life." These positions mirror "the fundamentalists' own entrepreneurial style of religion," in contrast with the Democratic hopes for "a government with the soul of a church." On the other hand, *Newsweek* (17 Sept. 1984) also characterized the Religious Right as supporters of "causes—school prayer, abortion and financial support for parents who send their children to parochial schools—[that] all require government action to alter what they see as the permissive status quo."

Journalistic casuistry is even more baffling at *The Nation*. There the left hand that permits Mr. Ribuffo to reflect on the injustice of editorial assaults on fundamentalist politics is countered by a right hand that allows Hans Koning in the same month to decry the "wave of obscurantism . . . sweeping the Western world" because of conservative religious attitudes fostered by people like Mr. Reagan and Mr. Carter. "Beliefs . . . are purely private matters. . . . They have been private matters since the last public burning of a heretic, which is not that long ago. We want to keep them private." But in March 1983, *The Nation* defended the very public stances of the National Council of Churches on "aid to the poor, development, and social justice in the Third World, racial integration, and minority rights" against attacks by *60 Minutes* and the *Reader's Digest*. A year later, though, *The Nation* (8 Sept. 1984) was attacking Reagan for asserting that "religion rightly belongs in every section of American political life":

> God may indeed prefer Reagan to Mondale . . . but there is no good way of knowing, beyond the claims of self-proclaimed prophets, whether in purple robes or three-piece suits. Diderot, after all, had a point: 'Mankind shall not be free until the last king is strangled with the entrails of the last priest.'

Well, until N.C.C. officials become the last to provide *The Nation's* editors with the weapons for regicide, the difficult task of adjusting the "mutual relations and cognate workings" of press and clergy will proceed. Carlyle's allowance of only "some centuries" for the task now seems optimistic. cc

POLEMICS & EXCHANGES

On Seeing Red

by Roy Traband

Red Dawn is not a particularly good flick, as we used to call motion pictures in my day. But your reviewer misses some of the underlying reasons for its immense success.

Nothing so rankles our elitists today, especially one on the NY-DC-LA Axis of Media, as the thought that a gaggle of hillbillies could come boiling out of the hills to challenge a UN kind of world order. Yes, the very concept of private ownership of small arms is anathema to them, those who sit atop our channels of communication generally.

To resist Afghanistani style is also unfathomable to the New Elite Red Guard in Media. Eric Hoffer, the late SF forklift philosopher, and Herman Kahn, the late futurist, saw the inherent weakness of the intellectual fascisti; and, therefore, they were not given the adulation afforded the shallow TV anchorperson Frank Reynolds when all three died at about the same time.

An audience of West Coast critics, it is reported, applauded the film's beginning a la the announcement of a Mexico ruled by Marxists; the jeering went on when the firearms registration lists were utilized in Colorado to round up weapons (European style circa World War II); and there was snickering when it was uttered that America would always be free. So, the entire thing from beginning to end was a litmus test on varying cultural attitudes to fighting tyranny.

The film is a classic case of why all media in the U.S. now are on such parlous times. With the worst yet to come. cc

Roy Traband describes himself as a subscriber and armed citizen.

Mr. Dragash Replies:

Mr. Traband makes a valuable point about *Red Dawn*, one which I might have addressed but did not largely for reasons of unity: there is only so much that can be discussed in a brief review. I share much of Traband's sentiment on the right of self-defense, so much so that I am tempted to apply it to assaults on my mind as well as my person. As Voltaire might have written, I agree with everything you say, but I will oppose to the death your right to say it. cc

C. P. Dragash maintains an armed vigil from his ivory tower in New Rome.

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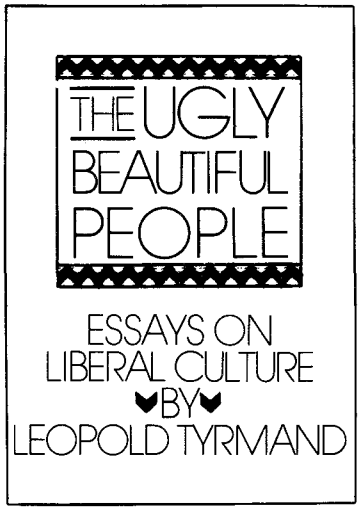
The Ugly Beautiful People: Essays on Liberal Culture

by Leopold Tyrmand



This collection of essays can easily be branded and condemned as belligerent and inflammatory. It certainly will be denounced by many as indulging in arbitrary generalizations. "I am repeatedly asked to explain what I mean by the term 'Liberal Culture,'" writes Mr. Tyrmand. "The general impression is that whatever it means I do not like it. This is correct."

By this, Mr. Tyrmand makes clear that he voices his ideological sentiments—something quite different from political feelings. Not research, comparative data or scholarly approaches to fact and issue are focused on here, but cultural passions, imaginative argumentation, literary convictions, emotional speculations, intellectual affections—in other words: those modes of persuasion through which politics and society become objects of higher and more sophisticated sensibilities.

Before they became the domains of professionals, politics and the arts used to serve as romantic arenas where independent minds fought and duelled in order to rarify matters of culture, society, public affairs. Mr. Tyrmand obviously wishes to revive this tradition.

January 1985, 130 pages
Cloth, ISBN 0-8191-4086-4 $22.50
Paper, ISBN 0-8191-4143-7 $ 8.75

Postage and handling
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University Press of America
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Lanham, MD 20706

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A PRUDENT PROGRESSIVE by Leopold Tyrmand

When I first came to these shores, almost 20 years ago, an escapee from communism's lethal embrace, a sort of antiwar was raging here. I felt betrayed. As anyone who lived under the most intricate tyranny of mind and body, I believed it every free man's sacrosanct duty to combat communism's reptile stranglehold on truth and humanness with every means possible. Anyone I knew in Eastern Europe who did not serve communism felt the same way: to us the Vietnam War was a just and noble war, a valiant attempt to slay the foulest dragon in history. Yet, the magnitude and depth of the American antiwar protest had impressed me. "Perhaps they know something I don't?" I asked myself. "Perhaps I'm emotionally disturbed and they're sane?"

Eighteen years of recriminations, the heinous treatment of the Vietnam War veterans, Afghanistan's and Poland's martyrdoms, and the public's reaction to the Vietnam War Memorial in Washington later, I must confess that my past surmise of the protesters' correctness makes me now feel ashamed of that instant of debilitated judgment. Clearer than ever, it seems to me, the war looms in our common awareness as right, noble, morally justified, and geopolitically necessary. For all the exertions of countless Cronkites arguing to the contrary, that war was not lost on the battlefield but at home, where a powerfully vocal minority had decided to terminate it in the name of allegedly moral reasons. *Allegedly*, for this minority was for a long time involved in a ruthless fight for self-advancement by claiming a sway over the nation's soul and conscience. This minority had established an ideological control of the opinion-making mechanism that then verged on a monopoly, and looked forward to a political hegemony in the future. At the peak of the war, this minority forged a coalition of radical activists, fellow travelers, liberal intellectuals, hyperactive clergymen, and overtly procommunist agitators, and produced some of the most manic public events in the history of Western statehood.

Thereafter, corporate chieftains, media moguls, and millionaire movie stars found themselves in cahoots with people who demanded a mandate for revolutionary power. Their rationale —amplified through every channel of communications—was that they just voiced their conscience—but somehow their conscience managed to be in perfect accord with the Soviet Union's *raison d'état*, with its global interests, with its dearest intentions of what to do with the rest of the world. Somehow it did not bother their conscience that their endeavors contributed to the killing of sons of their own people—the spokesmen of which they probably considered themselves in all sincerity—and that thereby they were committing a high treason with complete impunity, a fact that should have told them something about their own country whose institutions they kept condemning so bombastically and mendaciously.

During all that time, President Johnson maintained that there was no evidence of Soviet meddling in the American antiwar movement. He was perfectly correct. The Soviets would have been foolish to interfere and tamper with a satisfactorily performing mechanism of sedition and subversion that flawlessly worked to their advantage. What could do a better job for them than an overwhelming chunk of the American intellectual elite, clergy, and plutocracy that was willing to act on behalf of their most immediate geopolitical goals, eagerly representing the Soviet Union's label in America?

Surely enough, the moral consequence of sabotaging and aborting our efforts for the sake of international decency, was the Southeast Asian slaughterhouse after the communist takeover. Soon thereafter, we delivered a good part of Africa to the same fate, then came Afghanistan. Now we have the Soviet encroachment in Central America on our hands. But the heaviest defeat we have suffered was at home: the whole notion of service to the country, the heritage of 200 years of crafting the sense of relationship between Americans, their historic mission, and their freely elected government, has been blown to shreds. This was perhaps the greatest victory of the alliance between Politbureau, Hanoi, and these American visitors who turned into their comrades-in-arms. And now, it seems to me, my first impulse of loathing the protest marchers in the streets, and the sophisticated essayists in the fine literary journals, back in 1966, was right after all. cc

As someone who ardently wishes a better world for my family, my neighbors, my compatriots, all people of goodwill, and myself—I suspect that my desire for betterment is a plaything for philosophies and ideologies that propose how human affairs should be arranged. In the end, making up my mind about these matters brings me somewhere between the liberal faith in man and the conservative faith in something more than man's well-being as the ultimate measure of progress. Unfortunately, the position in the middle can be a source of considerable distress. cc

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